A Scientific Interpretation of Christianity

BY

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TO

MY TEACHER

Publication Note

It is sad to think that this Ms. should have been refused by every one of the half dozen British publishers to whom it was offered. Does it mean that the British public has no interest in the really serious problems of life, or that men have no heads for them? Either way it is a distressing thought. Miss Fraser's work is, without doubt, a masterpiece. My estimation of it is contained in a letter of mine to her which I am inserting here. I repeat that it is the profoundest philosophy, the most helpful soul-stirring psychology, the truest metaphysics that her book propounds. She has got hold of the real Christian teaching, unhappily now lost. As such I cannot sit still and see the result of her effort perish. I am therefore publishing it myself, though with me it is a matter of mere labour of love. I regret that I have no machinery or organisation at my command to push the book into public notice. That could only be done by a regular publisher. Under the circumstances I expect no profit but only loss from the publication.

The amount of literary trash which the English printing-press is turning out annually is amazing. I do not expect the consumers of such stuff to be attracted to this book readily. At the same time there are a few million men and women who are anxious to find out and get to the truth, though they are scattered about here and there and are difficult to get at. They are asking, and seeking, and knocking, everywhere, and need guidance. For them this book is really intended, as also for all those who are sure to arise from time to time demanding to know the truth. My object in publishing this book is to see that they shall have enlightenment, that when they ask they shall be given, when they seek they shall find, when they knock the door shall be opened to them. Thus will be fulfilled the text which says: "Ask, and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened."

Delhi
10. 1. 1940 **C. R. Jain**

My dear Elisabeth,

It is with very real pleasure that I have read and re-read your Ms. I congratulate you on the production of such a splendid work. It is a monument of labour and research and your psychological and philosophical points have been beautifully expounded and explained. You are the first woman philosopher Christendom has ever produced. Indeed, I can go further and say that you are the first real philosopher that Europe and America have ever produced. I have no doubt that you deserve to rank as the Saviour of Christianity and I doubt not that one day the world will recognise you as such.

C. R. JAIN

1-6-1939.

PREFACE

"Woe unto ye lawyers! ye have taken away the key of knowledge: you entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." These words, according to the Gospel of St. Luke, constitute the accusation levelled against the Jews by Jesus. What did they mean? Were they mere idle words spoken in an idle moment for the sake of rhetoric and effect? They could not be. The Teacher was not given to idle speech, and cared nothing for dramatic effect. What could he hope to gain, what impression to make on those against whom his words were uttered, if they were merely dramatic, unthinking words?

The purpose is plain. The cry of condemnation was uttered against the Jews' interpretation of the Old Testament. Jesus condemned it as wrong and perverse because it debarred the doctors who interpreted it, and their followers, from admission into the hall of understanding and the kingdom of light. They were interpreting their Testament literally, in the historical sense, whereas the knowledge it contained could be unlocked only with a key of knowledge—the Key of Knowledge. Jesus says definitely enough that they had taken away this key. Lost, destroyed, or thrown away, it was gone; and without it it was impossible for them and those they led to enter into the light of understanding. Great calamity would befall them all. "Woe unto ye!" It was not a curse born of spite, or ill-will, or hatred, because they did not accept him. It was an expression of angry sorrow and despair that they had lost the key of knowledge and with it the understanding of their Scriptures.

The truth is that the Old Testament is couched in allegorical language. To-day Science tells us that the creation of the world in six days as described in the Book of Genesis is nonsense. If we were possessed of the true reading of the Creation story we would say exactly the same thing. There is no conflict between Religion and

Science. Conflict arises only when the learned doctors of divinity and theology ignore the key of knowledge and endeavour to interpret their Scriptures without the guidance of its light. The sad state of the world to-day is attributable to the same cause. Our own doctors of divinity are still trying to unlook the treasurehouse of the Scriptures—both the Old and New Testaments—without the proper key. If a Jesus stood in our midst to-day he would tell them exactly what another Jesus is reported to have said to the Jews nearly two thousand years ago.

If further authority is needed to show the veiled nature of the language of the Jewish Scripture it will be found in St. Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians. "But their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart." St. Paul's words make it quite clear that he held the entire Mosaic literature to be concealed allegory. In the Epistle to the Galatians he definitely says of Abraham—one of the most famous and supposedly historical Patriarchs—and his family that they are an allegory.

In the appendix A I am giving the explanation of the mystery of the Godhead, though I shall not undertake to solve the Christian allegories in this book which is devoted to a thorough investigation of the true Christian Doctrine in a manner that conforms strictly to all the rules of rational and scientific thinking. Appendix B traces out the broad outlines of the history of religion and the birth of Christianity.

Elisabeth Fraser

1. 5. 1939.

TABLE of CONTENTS

A Scientific Interpretation of Christianity

CHAPTER I.

We moderns, living in an age of Science and Reason, have for the most part given up the religion of our fathers. Products of an age of Reason, the Christianity that is being taught us does not appear to us to be either scientific or reasonable. In consequence of this we have taken to ourselves a new religion, setting up as its godhead Materialism. We believe in the world of the senses and the supremacy of the body. "We live only once. Let us get all we can while we can. Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." This is the gist of our thinking, and on these lines are our lives directed. Belief in the existence of a kingdom of the soul has, for the most part, been either forgotten or rejected. Forgotten by the careless and heedless absorbed in getting as much as as they can of the good things of the world; rejected by the intelligent who seek in our Scriptures, apparently in vain, for proof of the existence of the soul and the necessity for being anything other than a Materialist.

Why is it that the religion of the orthodox church has no influence on us in our everyday life? Why has it failed to prevent us from pigeon-holing the principles of life into separate compartments—"Church", "State, "Trade", etc.; instead of grouping them all together under the head of Religion? The founder of the Christian Church, in common with the other saviours of the world who came before him, taught pure morality. A change in human conduct, with morality as the way of life, was the one purpose of his philosophy. In his teaching conduct is the essence of religion. Yet where is there any relationship to-day between human conduct and the religion he taught?

Christianity as it is being taught in our time fails to control man's nefarious activities because, based as it is on the miraculous and the irrational, it makes no practical appeal to the modern mind with its reasoning and

critical faculties that are so well to the fore in this age of Scientific progress. The Church cannot even offer us proof as to whether there is such a thing as a soul or not. They tell us that there is—"Christ says so, in the Gospels"—but they give us no proof beyond this fact that it is so according to the Gospels. They cannot tell us on what facts and laws of nature this assertion is based. They can only repeat parrot-like that there is a soul. Many churchmen even deny the very existence of the soul.

It is time that we stopped appealing to the Church for the guidance they cannot give, and began to exert ourselves in this quest for Truth, for illumination and guidance. And where are we most likely to discover it? Only in a religion that comes within the realms of Science. For Science, any Science, is nothing else but a systematic exposition or explanation of a fact or set of facts, which is or are capable of verification and of yielding certain and unvarying results. For this reason a religion that is based on scientific facts, as it must be if it is to be of any worth, is a Science. Religion must be amenable to scientific treatment. It is either a fact, grounded on a fact or facts, or it is a fiction; there is no other alternative. True religion must be a Science. It is, indeed, the Science of Sciences, since it is the Science of Life and living. On the other hand, a religion that is false is nothing else but a bundle of useless superstitions. For the sake of peace of mind no intelligent Christian anxious to find his bearings in a world gone mad for want of the sheet-anchor of a scientific religion should leave a stone unturned to find out whether his religion does or does not conform to the scientific requirements that we are entitled to demand from a religion that claims to expound the truth.

Let us turn to the Scriptures ourselves. Let us forget for a while the irrational interpretation that the pillars of the Church would have us swallow without demur. Let us see if we cannot discover for ourselves something more like reason, more like the truth, than they have been able to produce for us. The truth lies hidden somewhere. Where, if not in the Scriptures?

Why should we take it for granted that the truth must always elude us? We are human beings possessed of intellect and intelligence, gifted with the powers of thinking and reasoning. What are these gifts worth if they cannot ferret out the truth wherever it be and apply it to our own lives? Equipped thus we ought to be able to penetrate the thick mists of ignorance that would keep it ever from us.

With our own eyes, with attuned intellects alert to pounce on any truth that may be lying hid, let us see for ourselves whether our religion can give us the Truth for which the world is crying out. Let us give to our Scriptures our best attention, our scientifically-inclined modern minds freed from superstition and prejudice, our clear-headed reasoning that scorns the irrational and the unscientific. Where else are we to look for the truth if not in them? They were written centuries ago by men who firmly believed that they had discovered the truth. Who set down their knowledge for the help and guidance of future generations. In the Gospel of St John we are assured: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The men who wrote and believed that must have felt very sure of themselves, confident in the belief that the knowledge they possessed was the truth. Here in the Scriptures, if anywhere, is the truth to be found. The Teachers, St. Paul and the rest, were very anxious to preserve their knowledge for the benefit of those to come. They must have been in possession of facts that infallibly supported their belief. They must have felt very sure of those facts that to them evidently appeared scientific and incontrovertible. Can we not, then, learn the truth from them? Somewhere in their writings must be the key to their knowledge.

It is a duty every seeker after truth owes himself to find that key. It may well be that from a new investigation of the writings of the first Christian Teachers we shall find the key to a treasure-house such as we had not dared to dream of—Truth, grounded on natural laws, on which we may build our lives; light, whereby we may be guided through life's complexities; consolation, to help us bear the burdens that are the common lot;

and most dazzling jewel of the treasure, hope of eternal life, with the fear of death gone for ever.

We will confine our research to the Books of the New Testament and the writings of the earliest Fathers of the Church, which are known collectively as the Ante Nicene Christian Library. Because of their later date, all other documents are not to be relied upon for absolute accuracy.

When we turn to these writings we at once meet with encouragement. We see that the attitude of critical enquiry in which we are turning to their writings earns the full approval of the Teachers. Clement of Alexandria, without doubt the cleverest of the Christian Fathers and reputed to be a disciple of the Apostle Peter, actually tells us that "those who hunt after the divine teaching, must approach it with the utmost perfection of the logical faculty." What can be more pleasant to our ears when that intention is already in our minds? It is encouraging to see that the Fathers demand an acute and logical mind for the comprehension of their teaching. It augurs well for our enquiry, with its hint of a promise that what we shall find will need the faculty of logic well-developed to deal with it. Is that not what we want? A doctrine that is logical and rational? Apparently Clement agrees with us that religion must conform to the laws of nature, for he says that "both the law of nature and of instruction are one."

The Fathers appear to be quite certain in their own minds that Christianity is one with the law of nature. Tertullian bristles with impatience at non-Christian philosophy because to his idea it is not true to nature. "I could bear with her (philosophy's)* pretensions," he says, "if only she were true to nature, and could prove to me that she has mastery over nature." But that is exactly the complaints that we could hurl against his religion, with its virgin birth, its physical resurrection and such-like miraculous events quite contradictory to the laws of nature. Can it really be that we are being misdirected misguided? Surely that which number of men quite clearly regarded as being rational would be so regarded

*Bracketed words or phrases in the quotations are not mine unless I state so.

by us, were we to understand it as they did? I see no other answer but that the First Christians were familiar with a teaching that since their time has remained hidden from human eyes. A teaching very different from the one we know.

It would seem from their writings that the first Teachers were nothing if not realists and that the knowledge they had to impart was thoroughly practical and "true to nature." Tertullian for instance, writes: "The Epicureans, again, show still greater consistency in maintaining that all the senses are equally true in their testimony, and always so only in a different way. It is not our organs of sensation that are at fault, but our opinion. The senses only experience sensation, they do not exercise opinion; it is the soul that opines." We also see how much emphasis they laid on the necessity for scientific knowledge. In the Prophetic Scriptures that are contained in the A. N. C. L. we find: "For scientific knowledge is necessary ...... For as there is no believing without elementary instruction, so neither is there comprehension without science. For what is useful and necessary to salvation, such as [the knowledge of] the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and also of our own soul, are wholly requisite; and it is at once beneficial and necessary to attain to the scientific account of them." With all of which we can heartily agree.

When we come to examine the Scriptures more closely is there not one thing that soon attracts our notice? Is it nothing more than a suspicion that the Teacher hesitates to speak his mind openly? Is it apparent to you as it is to me that he appears almost to be making efforts to conceal his doctrine? In introducing a new idea he touches lightly on it, shying away from it immediately. To me it seems that he is afraid to emphasise his point; to enlarge upon his theme. He cloaks it carefully; wraps it in parable and allegory. The Teachers themselves lend support to this suspicion. In his Gospel, St. Mark says of Christ that "without a parable spake he not unto them." But listen to St. Paul. He says: "I come as an ambassador in bonds." What does he mean? That he was not free to speak openly?

Why were these men afraid to preach their doctrine openly, as they must have longed to do? Again they themselves provide the answer to our question. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine," is Christ's instruction according to St. Matthew, "lest they trample them under foot and turn and rend you." "Lest they turn and rend you." Here, of a certainty, is the reason for their obvious fear to speak their minds. We need to bear in mind the fact that they were endeavouring to introduce new ideas and beliefs. Their was an attempt to sow the seeds of a new doctrine; to spread a new religion. We know only too well that people with fixed religious convictions do not like their established beliefs to be upset They resent fiercely any attempt to supercede them. They vent their hatred on the heads of those daring enough to venture to do so. Without a doubt, they turn and rend them! As the Teachers of Christianity knew too well.

It had also to be kept, for this very reason, from the unwisdom of the thoughtless; from the good-natured but stupid ones who would babble of it to any clever "swine" who might sound him. "It is not meet," says Christ, in St. Mark's Gospel, "to take the children's bread and to cast it unto the dogs," the dogs being the good-natured simpletons who might babble. The Christian Fathers particularly needed to take the utmost precautions Theirs was the task of spreading the doctrine at a time when the early Christians were being subjected to persecution at the hands of the Romans. This accounts for such strict and careful precautions being taken as are recorded in Clement's writings. "Therefore James, having read the epistle, sent for the elders; and having read it to them said: 'Our Peter has strictly and becomingly charged us concerning the establishing of truth, that we should not communicate the books of his preachings, which have been sent to us, to any one at random, but to one who is good and religious, and who wishes to teach, and who is circumcised, and faithful. And these are not all to be committed to him at once; that, if he be found injudicious in the first, the others may not be entrusted to him. Wherefore let him be proved not less than six years........ ...And let him say: I take witness to heaven, earth,

water, in which all things are comprehended, and in addition to all these, that air also which pervades all things, and without which I cannot breath, that I shall always be obedient to him who gives me the books of the preachings; and those same books which he may give me, I shall not communicate to any one in any way, either by writing them, or giving them in writing, or giving them to a writer, either myself or by another or through any other initiation, or trick, or method, or by keeping them carelessly, or placing them before (any one) or granting him permission (to see them), or in any way or manner whatsoever communicating them to another; unless I shall ascertain one to be worthy, as I myself have been judged, or even more so, and that after a probation of not less than six years; but to one who is religious and good, chosen to teach, as I have received them, so I will commit them, doing these things also according to the will of my bishop. But otherwise, though he were my son or my brother, or my friend, or otherwise, in any way pertaining to me by kindred, if he be unworthy, that I will not vouchsafe the favour to him, as is not meet; and I shall neither be terrified by plot or mollified by gifts. But if even it should ever seem to me that the books of the preachings given to me are not true, I shall not so communicate them, but shall give them back. And when I go abroad, I shall carry them with me, whatever of them I happen to possess. But if I be not minded to carry them about with me, I shall not suffer them to be in my house, but shall deposit them with my bishop, having the same faith,......"

This passage shows plainly enough that the Teachers could not preach their doctrine openly and fearlessly. It must have been the fear of persecution and death that tied their tongues and compelled them to cloak their teachings in myth and allegory, so that only a gleam of the true light was allowed to shine here and there. In that way, only the more intelligent, real seekers would catch the glimpses. Then if they were really honest men, earnestly seeking the truth, those few rays of light would be enough to make them seek out the Teachers, when having proved their worth and their desire for enlightenment, they might be given further

instruction in secret. The Teachers were quite satisfied that only the most diligent seeker came to them through these means. We have Clement writing:" It sufficeth the gnostic....if only one hearer is found for him. You may hear therefore Pindar who writes, 'Divulge not before all the ancient speech.' The way of silence is sometimes the surest. And the mightiest word is a spur to the fight."

The Teachers were splendid men, caring only for the preservation and spreading of their doctrine. It may be taken for certain that for themselves some of them had no fear of danger or death from persecution. But they must have felt that there was an onus on them to protect the lives of their followers to the best of their ability. They would not have been prepared to sacrifice innocent men. They must have realised what was still more important. That if those few who knew the doctrine were to be entirely exterminated, it would be impossible to preserve it, and spread it among men that they might know and share the glory of it. Those fortunate enough to know the truth would guard against every possibility of its being lost. Naturally, they found it impossible to stand idly by without making some effort, guardedly, carefully, to spread the glorious doctrine that filled their hearts. Difficult, full of danger though it undoubtedly was, they taught their religion as best they could. Only small gleams of truth were allowed to shine through, and they made it still more difficult for it to be revealed to hostile eyes and ears, by wrapping it in mystifying utterances that said one thing and meant another. In that way even the most astute thinkers among the "swine" were deceived.

Something of the difficulty they had in teaching their doctrine can be seen from certain significant passages from their own writings. Clement describes the devices to which "Peter" was compelled to resort when giving instruction. "Then Peter said : 'Since therefore you assert that you are willingly awake through desire of hearing, I wish to repeat to you more carefully, and to explain in their order, the things that were spoken yesterday without arrangement. And this I propose to do throughout these daily disputations, that by night, when

privacy of time and place is afforded, I shall unfold in correct order, and by a straight line of explanation, anything that in the controversy has not been stated with sufficient fullness.' And then he began to point out to us how yesterday's discussion ought to have been conducted and how it could not be so conducted on account of the contentiousness or the unskilfulness of his opponent; and how therefore he only made use of assertion, and only overthrew what was said by his adversary, but did not expound his own doctrines either completely or distinctly. Then repeating the several matters to us, he discussed them in regular order and with full reason."

Peter himself paints a vivid picture of some of the heartbreaking difficulties under which the Teachers laboured. It is again *Clement who records his words.* "Meantime Peter rising . . . . thus began . . . . 'Nothing is more difficult, my brethren, than to reason concerning the truth in the presence of a mixed multitude of people. For that which is may not be spoken to all as it is, on account of those who hear wickedly and treacherously; yet it is not proper to deceive, on account of those who desire to hear the truth sincerely. What, then, shall he do who has to address a mixed multitude? Shall he conceal what is true? How, then, shall he instruct those who are worthy? But if he set forth pure truth to those who do not desire to obtain salvation, he does injury to Him by whom he has been sent, and from whom he has received commandment not to throw the pearls of His words before swine and dogs, who striving against them with arguments and sophisms, roll them in the mud of carnal understanding, and by their barkings and base answers break and weary the preachers of God's word. Wherefore I also, for the most part, by using a certain circumlocution, endeavour to avoid publishing the chief knowledge concerning the Supreme Divinity to unworthy ears.' Then beginning from the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, he briefly and plainly expounded to us, so that all of us hearing him wondered that men have forsaken the truth, and have turned themselves to vanity."

Clement himself had to take the utmost care in his work of spreading his knowledge. "Such were the impediments in the ways of my writing," he says, "and even now I fear, as it is said, 'to cast the pearls before swine, lest they tread them under foot, and turn and rend us.' For it is difficult to exhibit the really pure and transparent words respecting the true light, to swinish and untrained hearers. For scarcely could anything which they could hear be more ludicrous than these to the multitude; nor any subjects on the other hand more admirable or more inspiring to those of noble nature. 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him.' But the wise do not utter with their mouth what they reason in council .... But there is only a delineation in the memoranda, which have the truth sowed sparse and broadcast, that it may escape the notice of those who pick up seeds like jackdaws; but when they find a good husbandman, each one of them will germinate and produce corn."

Whereupon he charges his followers with these instructions. "Knowing, my brother, your eager desire after that which is for the advantage of us all, I beg and beseech you, not to communicate to any of the Gentiles the books of my preachings which I sent to you, nor to any one of our own tribe before trial; but if any one has been proved and found worthy, then to commit them to him, after the manner in which Moses delivered (his books) to the Seventy who succeeded to his chair......For, according to the rule delivered to them, they endeavour to correct the discordances of the Scriptures, if any one, haply not knowing the traditions, is confounded at the various utterances of the prophets. Wherefore they charge no one to teach, unless he has first learned how the Scriptures must be used."

We thus have indisputable proof from the Teachers themselves that our suspicion that they feared to speak openly is amply justified. In their dilemma—on the one hand their anxiety to bring the truth to those seeking it, and to preserve it for those coming after; on the other necessity for keeping it from the "swine" and the "dog"—they were compelled to resort to allegory and parable to cover up their real teaching. Clement tells us himself

that his aim is to conceal his knowledge from hostile eyes. "For I . . . . . wish artfully to conceal the seed of knowledge . . . . . because there is grave danger in divulging the secret of the true philosophy to those whose delight is to speak against everything." And again: "Some things I purposely omit, in the exercise of a wise selection, afraid to write, what I guarded against speaking."

The Teachers learnt the art of disguising in parable and allegory what they wished to reveal only to the elect few from the founder of Christianity himself. According to St. Luke he tells his disciples: "Unto you is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand . . . . For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed." The Apostles followed Christ's example, as did the Fathers in their turn. That the latter regarded themselves as the heirs of Christ's secret teaching is obvious from their writings. It is Clement who writes in some connection, "with us, indeed, who have had handed down from our forefathers the . . . mystery of the books which are able to deceive."

Clement is also at pains to explain why in lieu of anything better they adopted an evasive allegorical method of teaching. "And we profess not to explain secret things sufficiently—far from it—but only to recall them to memory, whether we have forgot aught, or whether for the purpose of not forgetting. Many things, I well know, have escaped us, through length of time, that have dropped away unwritten. Whence, to aid the weakness of my memory, and provide for myself a salutary help to my recollection in a systematic arrangement of chapters, I necessarily make use of this form . . . Some things my treatise will hint; on some it will linger; some it will merely mention. It will try to speak imperceptibly, to exhibit secretly, and to demonstrate silently."

Clement emphasises the need for allegory when he says: "But since this tradition is not published alone for him who perceives the magnificence of the word; it is requisite, therefore, to hide in a mystery the wisdom spoken, which the Son of God taught. Now, therefore,

Isaiah the prophet has his tongue purified by fire, so that he may be able to tell the vision. And we must purify not the tongue also, but also the ears, if we attempt to be partakers of the truth." Wherewith we have Tertullian telling us plainly that "very many events are figuratively predicted by means of enigmas and allegories and parables, and they must be understood in a sense different from the literal description."

All the Teachers, from Christ to the Fathers, hasten to assure us that the knowledge they had to offer could be found by a discerning eye. Christ gives us his assurance in St. Luke's Gospel. "There is nothing secret which shall not be revealed, nor hidden which shall not be disclosed." "Who hath ears to hear," he says according to St. Matthew, "let him hear." Without a doubt there is something in the New Testament that requires special seeing, hearing, understanding. Lactantius says that it is the truth. "Truth," he writes, "lies hidden veiled in obscurity." His assertion is well supported by Clement's opinion on the question. "And if one say that it is written, 'there is nothing secret which shall not be revealed, nor hidden which shall not be disclosed,' let him also hear from us, that to him who hears secretly, even what is secret shall be manifested. This is what was predicted by this oracle. And to him, that which is veiled shall be disclosed as truth; and what is hidden to the many, shall appear manifest to the few. For why do not all know the truth? Why is not righteousness loved, if righteousness belongs to all? But the mysteries are delivered mystically, that what is spoken may be in the mouth of the speaker; rather not in his voice, but in his understanding."

Wherefore we find him urging elsewhere: "We must, then, search the Scriptures accurately, since they are admitted to be expressed in parables, and from the names hunt out the thoughts which the Holy Spirit, propounding respecting things, teaches by imprinting His mind, so to speak, on the expressions; that the names used with various meanings, being made the subject of accurate investigation, may be explained, and that which is

hidden under many integuments may, being handled and learned, come to light and gleam forth. For so also lead turns white when you rub it . . . . So also scientific knowledge [gnosis], shedding its light and brightness on things, shows itself to be in truth the divine wisdom, the pure light, which illumines the men whose eyeball is clear, unto the sure vision and comprehension of truth." Small wonder that what was so carefully concealed and disguised is not immediately apparent to the casual eye. Of a surety it needs the most penetrating investigation that we can give it, if we are to bring it to light.

The fact that their doctrine was so carefully, so painstakingly covered up that all conditions of men were deceived, that it cannot be understood except under secret, private instruction by the chosen, instructed few, means that it is most unlikely that it can be clear to those who read the records according to the literal sense. This encourages us to believe still more firmly that what is being taught to-day as Christianity is not the Christianity that was known to the first Teachers. All that has gone before furnishes conclusive evidence for us to believe that the Scriptures are couched purposely and deliberately in deceptive language and that they do contain a doctrine that has lain lost in concealment since their composition.

It does not take a very penetrating eye to see that the Teachers disliked and distrusted this disguising, confusing, incoherent style that they were compelled to adopt through force of circumstances. The employment of such arts and graces as the allegorising of knowledge as was indulged in by the Jewish philosophers was openly condemned by the Fathers. Clement goes so far as to describe it as a disease of the understanding. "But we should confute the allegories, if we were there, the foolish passion for which has prevailed to such an extent as to constitute a disease of the understanding." His condemnation of the Greek allegorists is equally emphatic. He says of them : "They whom you call wise erred, in that, by concealing under unworthy stories things in themselves worthy, they led men to sin, and that not without dishonouring those whom they enticed to the gods."

St. Paul actually foresees a time that was coming when men would reject and ignore the true doctrine, and would turn to the fables for their religion. His prophecy is to be found in the second Epistle to Timothy. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." In his Epistle to the Ephesians he laments his powerlessness to explain the mysteries that are in the Gospels. He longs "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospels, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak." All he could do was to issue a warning in the first Epistle to Timothy against placing reliance on "fables" and "endless genealogies." "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith." Nor is attention to be paid to those who "having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they saw, nor whereof they affirm." For St. Paul is very definite that those who are lost will never understand the doctrine. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." He makes it further clear that the wrong interpretation is poison, while the true one is the saviour of life: "for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

Among the Fathres Novation, in encouraging the seeker after truth and urging him on, betrays his dislike of "idle fables." He writes: "Therefore as you run, I exhort you; and .... as you press in your course to the prize of your calling in Christ, I urge you on ... that, treading under foot and rejecting as well the sacrilegious calumnies of heretics as also the idle fables of Jews, you may hold the sole word and teaching of Christ." Clement, too, adds his voice to the general warning against taking a teaching that uses all such confusing devices as myth, parable and allegory at its face-value. He says, in effect, that they do contain knowledge. But that only by the

use of a key can that knowledge be unlocked, and the danger is that men will be invited by their leaders who have forgotten that there is a key to accept their literal meaning as true knowledge. He puts it less prosaically, but his meaning is the same. "Ask your father, and he will tell you; your elders, and they will declare to you.' This father, these elders ought to be enquired of. But you have not enquired whose is the time of the kingdom, and whose is the seat of prophecy, though He Himself points out Himself, saying, 'The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all things whatsoever they say unto you, hear them.'—Hear them He said, as entrusted with the key of the kingdom, which is knowledge, which alone can open the gate of life, through which alone is the entrance to eternal life. But truly, He says, they possess the key, but those wishing to enter they do not suffer to do so."

But however much the Teachers disliked the use of such devices, they felt that they were in a position where they could not do otherwise than employ them. It was better for them to record the doctrine mystically, than to leave no record of it at all. However unwillingly, however much it went against the grain, they wrote deliberately in mystifying confusion, in intentional incoherence. They seem to have derived some comfort from the fact that they were, after all, only following the precedent set by their predecessors. Their attitude can be deduced from the writings of Hippolytus where he says: "These things, beloved, we impart to you with fear, and yet readily on account of the love of Christ which surpasseth all. For if the blessed prephets who preceded us did not choose to proclaim these things, though they knew them, openly and boldly, lest they should disquiet the souls of men, but recounted them mystically in parables and dark sayings,......how much greater risk shall we run in venturing to declare openly things spoken by them in obscure terms?"

Being unable to teach the whole doctrine freely and openly they contented themselves with aiming at the further enlightenment of those who had already partaken of the knowledge by word of mouth. Thus addressing people already knowing a little it was not so vital that the

whole doctrine should be displayed. They thus concentrated, in their writings, on consolidating that work already begun by word of mouth, as is demonstrated by Clement when he writes : "For it is not required to unfold the mystery, but only to indicate what is sufficient for those who are partakers in knowledge to bring it to mind." Clement realises the danger of such teaching methods for he recommends that the books of his preachings be given to the brethren after the mysterious ceremony of initiation so "that they may indoctrinate those who wish to take part in teaching; for if it be not so done, our word of truth will be rent into many opinions."

The Teachers have left instructions as to how the task of unravelling their mysteries is to be gone about; against the prophecied time when the key would be lost and forgotten. First we have Tertullian to remind us again of the fact that the doctrine is a hidden one, lying under the surface. He says : "Divine reason ..... lies in the very pith and marrow of things, not on the surface, and very often is at variance with appearance." He further warns us against the mistake of taking the parables to be the sources of the subject-matter instead of using the subject-matter to interpret the parables. If we go about it in the right manner, he assures us, we shall not have to labour very hard. "We, however, who do not make the parables the sources whence we devise our subject-matter, but the subject-matter the sources whence we interpret the fables, do not labour hard, either to twist all things (into shape) in the exposition, while we take care to avoid all contradictions." "But it is more to the point," he adds, "that it is not lawful to draw conclusions about anything else than the subject which was immediately in hand."

He evidently has the Jewish interpreters of the parables of the Old Testment in mind here. For he accuses them elsewhere in his writings of twisting facts to suit their interpretation of parables instead of learning new facts from a proper, scientific understanding of them. He speaks of these interpreters with the utmost disapproval. " ..... and ambitious of glory and eloquence alone, if they fell upon anything in the collection of Scriptures which displeased them, in their own peculiar

style of research, they perverted it to their own purposes: for they had no adequate faith in their divinity to keep them from changing them, nor had they any sufficient understanding of them either, as being still at the time under veil—even obscure to the Jews themselves, whose peculiar possession they seemed to be."

Clement writes scathingly against those who accept a teaching on faith alone, without considering it necessary to balance it against such angles as the philosophical and the logical, or without regard to the laws of nature. "Some who think themselves naturally gifted," he writes, "do not wish to touch either philosophy or logic; nay more, they do not wish to learn natural science. They demand bare faith alone; as if they wished, without bestowing any care on the vine, straightway to gather clusters from the first." We must keep Clement's condemnation of unscientific enquiry well in mind, and determine not to take anything on faith alone, but to bestow on it all the philosophic, logical and scientific reasoning that he demands. He further emphasises the value of a philosophic turn of mind in an investigation of this kind when he says: "Philosophy came into existence, not on its own account, but for the advantages reaped by us from knowledge, we receiving a firm persuasion of true perception, through the knowledge of things comprehended by the mind." The philosophy of the Christian Teachers did not mean the speculative thought that it almost wholly means to modern philosophers. It was the apex of a science of nature which studied the laws of life and being.

Clement also gives us a solemn warning which if we remember it will help us in the task we have set ourselves. He says: "But well knowing that the Saviour teaches nothing in a merely human way, but teaches all things to his own with divine and mystic wisdom, we must not listen to His utterance carnally; but with due investigation and intelligence must search out and learn the meaning hidden in them. For even those things which seem to have been simplified to the disciples by the Lord Himself are found to require not less, even

more, attention than what is expressed enigmatically, from the surpassing superabundance of wisdom in them. And whereas the things which are thought to have been explained by Him to those within—those called by Him the children of the kingdom—require still more consideration than the things which seem to have been expressed more simply, and respecting which therefore no questions were asked by those who heard them, but which, pertaining to the entire design of salvation, and to be contemplated with admirable and supercelestial depth of mind, we must not receive superficially with our ears, but with application of the mind to the very spirit of the Saviour, and the unuttered meaning of the declaration."

Again the warning is sounded even with respect to his own writings that they "contain the truth mixed up in the dogmas of philosophy or rather covered over and hidden, as the edible part of the nut in the shell. For, in my opinion, it is fitting that the seeds of truth be kept for the husbandman of the faith and no others." We have seen enough from the sayings of the founder of Christianity and the writings of the other early Teachers to encourage us in the belief that there is a doctrine hidden in the Scriptures of which as yet we know nothing; save the assurance of the Teachers that it is indeed there. With this assurance ringing in our ears, I am of the opinion that it will not prove a fruitless search if we continue to seek in the Scriptures for that knowledge of the truth we all desire so much. Christ himself says: "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

CHAPTER II.

The first concern of any religion with pretences to rationality is to settle once and for all, the question—Is there a soul? Our immediate duty, then, is to find out the opinion of the Teachers on this all-important point. The first thing concerning the soul to strike us and stimulate us in our quest for a Christianity that is rational and scientific is the discovery in the New Testament that its existence is taken for granted by the Teachers. St. Matthew in his Gospel reports Jesus as asking: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Not only do we find Christ himself speaking quite naturally of the soul as an existing thing, we also see that he values it as a man's most precious possession. See what a price he sets on it. Ownership of the whole world and all the things therein compensate a man nothing if the cost is the loss of his soul.

St. Matthew also reports him as teaching: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body. He says the same thing in the Gospel of St. John. "Fear him not, who can destroy the body, but him who can kill the soul." Obviously Christ places much value on the soul. His teaching seems to be that the destruction of the body does not matter; it is the soul which must be protected from harm. This seems strange to us modern materialists, worshippers of the body that we are. Can there after all be something in us that is more important than the body? Well, we have seen what Christ thinks about the soul. Let us turn to the early Fathers of the Church to see what they know of it. A good deal apparently for we have Arnobius asking us the question: "For what are we men but souls shut up in bodies?"

It seems that Christ and the other Teachers believe in the existence of the soul. We products of an age of rationalism do not, of course, accept the soul as an existing thing until we are given sufficient proof to remove our doubts. Most momentously for us we find that the Teachers have set down in philosophical language the

reasons for the belief they hold in the soul and its existence. It only remains for us to examine their facts to see whether or not their reasoning is sound and open to acceptance. It certainly would be of the utmost value to us were our doubts and misgivings in this respect to be finally set at rest, and we could believe ourselves as being something more than mere perishable bodies.

Tertullian is one of the most enlightened of the early Fathers and it is in his writings that we find this most significant phrase: "........the soul, which we acknowledge to be an indivisible, simple substance." These three words, 'indivisible,' 'simple,' 'substance,' employed in describing the soul, are of tremendous importance to us in our quest for truth.

To begin with the word 'substance.' Everything that exists is a substance of some kind. This is a natural law that should form the basis of all religion and philosophy. It is obvious that nothing which is not a substance can be said to exist; or at best it can only 'exist' in the mind as an idea. So that if, as Christ believed, the soul exists then it must be as a substance. There are only two kinds of substance—living and non-living—and things can exist only as living or non-living substances, or as a combination of the two. The non-living substance is familiar to us under its more common name, matter. As is commonly known, our bodies are composed of matter, which, we must bear in mind, is a non-living substance. There is not one spark of life in the atoms of matter. It makes no difference how many millions of them go to the making of a body; they can never give it even the tiniest vital spark. When we say that a body lives we mean simply that that body—composed of dead matter, remember—has within it something that is living and is giving it, perhaps lending it would be more accurate, life. In other words it is pervaded with a substance that is living. It is this living substance that goes by the name of Spirit, or more commonly, Soul.

We find that there is an excellent definition of it in the Syriac Documents. "Spirit is a substance, subtle, immaterial, and which issues forth without form." And again: "Now spirit is properly substance, incorporeal,

and uncircumscribed. And that is incorporeal which does not consist of a body, or whose existence is not according to breadth, length, and depth. And that is uncircumscribed which has no place, which is wholly in all, and in each entire, and the same in itself." Gregory Thaumaturgus also insists that the soul is a substance. "That the Soul is a substance is proved in the following manner. In the first place the definition given to the term substance suits it very well. And that definition is to the effect, that substance is that which, being ever identical, and ever one in point of numeration with itself is yet capable of taking on contraries in succession. And that this soul without passing the limits of its own proper nature takes on contraries in succession, is, I fancy, clear to everybody, ... And in the second place, because if the body is a substance, the soul must also be a substance. For it cannot be that what only has life imparted should be a substance, and that what imparts the life should be no substance."

As Gregory Thaumaturgus recognises, without this living substance that men have named Soul the body is absolutely lifeless and unconscious. That condition which we call death is simply the body from which the soul, the living substance, has gone. Reasoning thus on an absolutely scientific basis, we have at the very commencement of our study of the Scriptures, discovered that man is possessed of a soul. Literally so, for in very fact he is dead when his soul deserts his body. It means of course, that the real man is the soul. My soul is me, not the dead, unconscious matter which surrounds it.

We have settled the fact that there is such a thing as a soul. That it is a substance and has, therefore, an existence of its own. We can now go further to see what Tertullian means when he talks of the soul as being indivisible and simple. If we do find proof that the soul is indeed an indivisible and simple substance then we are bound to admit that not only does the soul exist but that being simple it is indestructible and therefore immortal. Let us turn again to philosophy in an endeavour to find out if it is as we are beginning to suspect it might be from what Tertullian says.

Now, when the philosopher sets out to examine matter and break it down he continues until he reaches the furthest limit of divisibility. He calls that indivisible unit an atom. The scientist calls it an electron, a proton, a neuron. Call it what you will. It is the same whatever its name—the smallest indivisible unit. As the subject is being examined here from the philosophic point of view it is fitting that we use the philosopher's term. The fact that all forms of matter can be broken down and reduced to an atom, which we remind ourselves is the smallest indivisible unit, proves its imperishability. A simple, non-compound thing must be permanent and indestructible. Nothing can be added to it; therefore it had no beginning. Nothing can be taken from it; therefore it has no end. It always was, is, and forever will be. This is true of all substance.

We see from their writings that the Christian Fathers understood this perfectly, for Clement writes: "that which is simple, and which is without any of these things by which that which subsists can be dissolved, is without doubt incomprehensible and infinite, knowing neither beginning nor end, and therefore is one and alone ....But that which is compound is subject to number, and diversity, and division......and is a diversity collected into one species."

Now that we have established the fact that the atoms or units of substances are indestructible and therefore eternal, we see that if we can once find out whether the soul is a simple unit or not, we shall already have travelled far along the path to knowledge. When we turn again to the writings of the Fathers it is to find Tertullian declaring: "It is essential to a firm faith, to declare with Plato that the soul is simple; in other words, uniform and uncompounded; simple, that is to say, in respect of its substance." What evidence can we produce to enable us to give credence to this positive statement of Tertullian's that the soul is a simple substance?

With this end in view let us consider the faculty of perception, or understanding. We realise that it is an attribute of the soul. We know that it cannot be an attribute of the body, composed as it is of inert matter.

Besides, perception is the function of a simple substance. We can prove this by taking an easy sentence—'The orange is a fruit'—which consists of five words. Let us suppose that the soul consisted of five parts with each part taking cognisance of one word. Then we should have the curious situation arising of one part knowing 'The', another 'orange' and so on with the other words of the sentence. But there would be no part that would know the whole of the sentence. Wherein lies the significance. One part knows only 'The'—but what of 'The ?' It could be applied to anything. Another part knows 'orange'—and many things can be said of 'orange'. Another knows 'is,' a verb that can be used with reference to a thousand nouns—and so on with the rest of the sentence. How then are we to get the meaning of the sentence as a whole ? We could say that the parts exchanged the pieces of information that they had acquired, until the sentence was built up, as it were. But on that preposterous supposition there would be duplication of the meaning of the sentence. There would be not one consciousness or understanding of its significance, but as many understandings as the number of parts taking part in knowing it. Which, clearly, is an absurdity. The understanding of man, which does understand such things as complex sentences, documents and books, must be an attribute of a simple, and not a compound thing.

There are other factors to be taken into account, which leave no room for doubting that the soul is a simple unit. In the absence of a constant, unchanging individual, for instance, the consciousness would be like an ever flowing stream and it could not possibly sustain arguments and long, continuous trains of thought and such-like. It would be merely a multitude of fleeting states, each one of which might carry its own mental equipment, but which would of a necessity carry away with itself its own bit of immediate experience, leaving nothing behind to be picked up by anything that might follow. For long and intricate mental operations, an individuality is needed that will retain and remember and adjust the past to the present and future. Besides, certain conceptions such as love, beauty, infinity, etc ; cannot be broken up into parts and are not therefore capable of being distributed.

The Fathers are firmly of the opinion that the soul is simple and therefore immortal and we find among them that Gregory Thaumaturgus also asserts that "the Soul, being incorporeal is simple; since thus it is both uncompound and indivisible into parts. It follows in my opinion, as a necessary consequence that what is simple is immortal . . . . . and what is subject to dissolution is compound; consequently the soul being simple and not being made up of diverse parts, but being uncompound and indissoluble, must be, in virtue of that, incorruptible and immortal." Tertullian also teaches that the soul is a simple substance and as such is incapable of dissolution and division, and is therefore immortal. He says of it: "being thus single, simple, and entire in itself, it is as incapable of being composed and put together from external constituents as it is of being divided in and of itself; in as much as it is indissoluble. For if it had been possible to construct it and to destroy it, it would no longer be immortal. Since, however, it is not mortal, it is also incapable of dissolution and division." With the irrefutable evidence that we have seen before us, we can now agree with the Teachers that there is a soul, that it is moreover the real individual, and that being simple and indestructible it is immortal.

It is interesting to note that modern Science has never really closely investigated the question of the existence or non-existence of the soul. Physics, Chemistry, Biology, etc., are alike incompetent to deal with the phenomena of consciousness. Their conclusion that within their own departments they have not come across anything apart from matter that could be termed soul, is not quite unexpected. As a matter of fact, the subject lies more in the realm of psychology than in the purely materialistic sciences. But it would seem that even the psychologists have declined to investigate the matter properly. The one or two who have studied the unitary aspect of life have been compelled to acknowledge the existence of an immaterial substance performing unitary functions that would be utterly impossible for matter to fulfil. Professor William Mc. Dougall, for instance, as a result of his studies has arrived at the conclusion that there must be such a thing as a soul. In

his book, "Physiological Psychology" he says : "We are compelled to admit . . . . . that the so-called psychical elements are . . . . partial affections of a single substance or being; and since . . . . this is not any part of the brain, is not a material substance, but differs from all material substances in that while it is unitary, it is yet present, or can act or be acted upon, at many points in space simultaneously . . . . . . we must regard it as an immaterial substance or being. And this being thus necessarily postulated as the ground of the unity of individual consciousness, we may call the soul of the individual."

McDougall is probably the only modern philosopher who has arrived from his own reasoning at the conclusion drawn by the first Christian Teachers nearly two thousand years ago. But I am bound to add that even he has failed to study the full nature of the mysterious, immaterial substance that we call the soul. He knows nothing about any other attributes it may possess. In fact it does not even occur to him that it may possess others.

The position of modern psychology is truly lamentable. Most of its votaries prefer to remain Agnostic and limit their investigation to certain aspects of the phenomena of the brain and nerves from which they expect to understand the functioning of the mind. Even so they have no hesitation in using the term 'psychology' for their science though from its derivation—Psyche in Greek signifying soul—the word has only one meaning : the science of the soul. No body who exhausts his investigation in a superficial study of emotions and sensations. centres and nerves, and the brain with its grey and white cells, is entitled to call himself a psychologist. As we pursue our course I fancy that we shall find that the psychology of the teachers of Christianity is, in striking contrast, far more profound and deep.

4

CHAPTER III.

It is common knowledge that the ultimate aim of us all is to achieve happiness; and without any end to it if possible. We would all be ready to admit that we spend our lives in avoiding as much discomfort and misery as we can. We run away in terror from worry and unhappiness. We strive desperately to attract happiness our way, to persuade that capricious goddess that we are worthy of her blessing and deserve that she should look upon us with her warm, sunny smile. Everything we do can be traced back to this all-pervading desire for happiness and the avoidance of pain. We may seek her in the guise of fame, fortune, love, knowledge, service, and so forth; the ultimate aim is the same. We run after money that having attained it we hope to acquire comfort and security, with no more worrying for the future. We chase fame and glory because we think they might bring us pleasure and a happy confidence in ourselves So it goes; the money, the fame, the glory; the means to the same end—happiness. Let us subject ourselves to a little self-analysis to prove the truth of this.

The eternal quest for happiness on the part of the individual manifests itself in the form of attachment and aversion; attachment to what is considered likely to promote his happiness, aversion to what he deems will not. Always he strives to get more of what he likes; always he seeks to destroy what is inimical to him and his happiness. It comes, in fact, to this; all his energy is born of the forces of attraction and repulsion resident in him. In relation to his will they appear as love and hatred and are governed by desire. Desire to possess a thing is love for or attraction towards it; desire to avoid it is hatred or repulsion of it. All the individual's desires assume one or other of these two forms. The effect of desire is either to draw something towards, or to drive something away from, him. Desire gives rise to emotion; that is, a motion towards an object in mind or away from it. The word emotion comes from the Latin 'e',—out, or up, and 'moveo'—to move. Emotion therefore is the resultant of mental energy plus desire, and implies a moving of the mind or soul.

From this we see, to digress a little, that attraction expresses itself in such emotions as respect or admiration for superiors; friendliness or affection for equals; benevolence or compassion for inferiors. In like manner repulsion is expressed in such emotions as terror or apprehension for superiors; hatred or rage for equals; contempt or superciliousness for inferiors. In fact, all the emotions arise from one or other of these two sources, which themselves originate from desire.

It comes to this. All our conscious activity is the result of our willing. We are slaves of will, inasmuch as it is the will which dictates to us what we shall or shall not do. For on further analysis we see that the will is entirely dependent upon desire. In other words, the will is simply the sum-total of the individual's desires, both conscious and sub-conscious It is the strongest desires that actually control the will and determine the individual's actions, since being the strongest they are therefore the most energetic. When we penetrate still further into our psychology we discover the fact that every form of desire indicates some sort of ideal in the mind that it is making every endeavour to satisfy. From which we can understand how through the will desire does her utmost to satisfy its every wish; that with all desires satisfied we may be happy. A task that most of us would think impossible knowing only too well that as soon as one wish is dealt with and gratified a thousand others come rushing and tumbling into the consciousness clamouring for fulfilment. It should be obvious now that the thirst for happiness is a natural craving with all human beings.

To return to our chosen path. Thus far we have learnt that the soul exists and is therefore a substance. We also know that it is the living part of man, and because of that is the essential part of his being. Now, since by nature the soul is a substance, it is capable of a separate existence by itself, away from the body. It is also possessed of certain attributes and qualities, as are all substances. Since the longing for happiness plays so important a role in the human make-up let us seek to

discover what sort of happiness, if any, the soul would experience if it dwelt in its own pure state completely withdrawn from the influence of the body.

Whether he accepts the fact or not man is agog with the thirst for happiness. But, to such an extent is he rational, he can have absolutely no idea of a mental emotion, much less any hankering after it, unless there is some possibility of its realisation. The emotion of bliss is no exception to this rule. The constant craving of the soul for happiness, therefore, testifies to the fact that it is capable of realising and enjoying bliss. Thus man's search for happiness is for nothing new. It is a search for something either lost or hidden. Where does he get his ideal of pure happiness from ? Why is he so sure that he can experience it if only he can find it ? Perhaps it is in the innermost recesses of his real self, lying buried beneath the flesh? Perhaps the soul could realise perfect bliss if it dwelt in its natural state, away from other influences ?

When we return to our study of the New Testament we find St. Paul stating clearly enough in the Epistle to the Galatians that the soul by itself is capable of enjoying happiness. His claim is that "the fruit of the spirit is......joy, peace." When so august an authority as St. Paul himself writes thus it means that our enquiry is well worth pursuing. Let us make use of our reasoning faculties to find out whether or not bliss is a quality of the pure soul. First of all we need to realise that it is not the body which experiences pleasure and pain. Is it not composed of dead matter? No dead body yet has ever felt sensations of pleasure or pain. Since, however, we do experience these 'feelings' we cannot but conclude that it is the soul itself that is endowed with the power of feeling. It is this power of feeling that distinguishes the soul from stones and all material—that is physical—things. Psychologists have long recognised this and have given it the name 'feeling-tone.'

When we analyse pleasure and pain, we discover that pleasure is of three kinds and pain of two. The three kinds of pleasure are physical, mental, spiritual. The two kinds of pain are physical and mental. There

is no such thing as spiritual pain; we shall see why, later. Pysical and mental pleasures—and pains too, although we are not here concerned with them—spring from the same source—the five senses; touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing. They depend on the functioning of these senses or on the recollection of sensory functioning. Thus pleasure is nothing more than gratification of the senses; and, therefore, there is nothing lasting about it.

Objects of themselves are not capable of giving pleasure, as we can soon show. Suppose that I take some fruit of which I am very fond, and I get much pleasure from eating it. Does my pleasure come from the fruit itself or elsewhere? I am obliged to think that it must come from elsewhere, since the fruit does not always give me pleasure. When I am ill, or when my stomach is full and has no need of more food, then I get no pleasure if I partake of the fruit; quite the contrary. Then, too, although I myself get much pleasure in the ordinary way from this particular fruit, there are some people to whom it is an abomination.

On mature reflection I am forced to see that it is not in the fruit—the object—that the feeling of pleasure lies, but in my inclination; that is, in my mind. This is further borne out by the fact that I can acquire a taste for a particular thing. On smoking for the first time, for instance, I may think that I detest tobacco, but if I persist in smoking I can gradually acquire a strong liking for it. The truth is that my mind becomes obliging enough to long for it. From these facts I think we may safely conclude that the pleasures of taste are not in the food we eat but in the mind. The same reasoning naturally goes to prove that it is the same with the other senses.

In addition to this I find that if pleasures had a separate existence apart from me, they could be known to me only through the media of the senses, since the senses are the only means by which I am able to establish contact between myself and the outside world. But I never feel pleasure passing through my senses, only matter in some shape or form. I notice, furthermore, that my pleasures are short-lived, depending on the actual contact

with particles of matter; or in psychological language, on the actual contact between the mind and the vibrations from the objects of the material universe. Music, for example, charms my ear only for so long as I actually hear it. Food pleases me only for so long as I am eating it.

There is yet another aspect of sensual pleasure to which we need give consideration. The pleasures of the senses are not only shortlived; they also give rise to much anxiety and trouble. If I like a thing, I long to possess it, or get more and more of it, and if I have not the means whereby I can acquire it, then I am miserable. What is more, in my endeavours to possess longed-for objects I am quite likely, or perhaps I should say that as things are constituted in the modern world I am certain, to come into conflict with others entertaining like desires. And I cannot always be sure of victory. From which we gather that the pleasures of the senses are far from being blessings and cannot be depended upon always to give us that joy, that happiness for which we hanker. Such then, are the sensual pleasures of which the soul may partake through its partner the flesh. We now have some idea of the kind of happiness the soul can get for itself in union with its body. Let us see what happiness, if any, it could get from an existence purely as soul.

We must realise that when the soul exists without a body it loses the five senses. This is obvious when we remember that they are the embodied soul's one connection with the external world and that when it wishes to experience bodily pleasures from things outside itself it can do so only through their media. When the soul exists in its own purity it loses the necessity for senses, and therefore, there will be no such things as sensual pleasures. These are replaced by the third kind of pleasure—that of the spirit. What is this pleasure, this joy, of the spirit? Can it compensate for the loss of the pleasures of the senses that are so intense and delightful at times? Is it likely to prove itself to be so immeasurably great that we shall long to experience it? According to St. Paul, Christ thought so: "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross." He did not hesitate to

sacrifice his body that his soul might come into its own and he might experience the bliss pertaining to it.

The Fathers, too, apparently set great store by the happy state of the free soul. They write that when the soul is freed from the body "there is no pain, there is no grief, there is no groaning; there is no recollection of evils, there are no tears, there is no envy, there is no hatred of the brethren, there is no unrighteousness, there is no arrogance .... slander ...... bitterness, there are none of the cares of life, there is no pain from parents, there is no pain from gold, there are no wicked thoughts, there is no devil, there is no death, there is no night, but all is day."

When we come to analyse this joy of the spirit what do we discover it to be? The first thing we must do is to distinguish between pleasure and joy. We have come to realise that pleasure is gratification of the senses, and because of that is fleeting, some delight lasting only for a short time and then ceasing. Spiritual joy, on the other hand, is an emotion. It contains the element of freedom in it; freedom that is at the same time glorious and triumphant, containing as it does the idea of conquest. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross."

It is this freedom that is the essence of the joy, the delight, of the spirit. Take the word 'delight', and what do we find it to be? It is a compound word built up from the Latin prefix 'de' meaning 'intense,' and 'light,' the contrary of 'heavy'. Thus we have 'intense lightness,' a state of being in opposition to the care-laden, that is, the worried or sorrowful, attitude of the soul. From this we see that delight signifies mental ease, freedom from irksome liability, and, therefore, the state of lightheartedness that is a necessary concomitant of release from anxiety. Thus, for the simple reason that true joy contains in itself the sense of freedom, we see that it is an emotion, with its roots springing from mental conviction, or in religious parlance, faith. We shall understand more clearly this joyous exultation of freedom from bondage if we take a concrete example for illustration.

We can take the case of the student who awaits the result of his final examination. During the waiting-time he is in a state of feverish anxiety. He thinks of the long years of difficult study he has devoted to his work to the exclusion of everything else; of the expense it has been for him or his parents. He is thrown into a panic of worry when he realises that on the result depends his future, and his hopes of a career. His soul is fettered by these anxieties; is held tight in their bondage.

Then comes the news of success. His immediate reaction is a feeling of intense relief. His soul is freed from those fetters of worries and anxieties as to failure or success. His delight, surely, consists in overwhelming freedom and exultation of the spirit because it is released from some of its bonds. Truly, he experiences an intense lightness. In short, joy. It is this freedom from fear of failure that gives him his feeling of delight. No external circumstances have anything to do with it. It does not matter where or how, or from whom, he receives the news. It may be conveyed to him on the filthiest scrap of paper, written in a hand so bad as to be almost illegible. It may be conveyed to him by the most unpleasant creature he could hope to meet with, by the harshest voice he had ever heard. In fact, the method of conveying the news of success can offend the student's senses in every possible way. Nevertheless,, it will do nothing to lessen his joy. His release is just as great. No more hard study for that particular examination. No more fears for his career. He knows that his success has freed him from his tormenting doubts and worries. Hence the emotion of joy, welling up, as it does, from conviction.

Thus we see that spiritual happiness or joy is not produced through the agency of the senses; it comes from within. But there is no room inside the soul which can be used as a storehouse: not even for happiness. But since we do sometimes actually feel happiness and the joy of freedom, and in a manner that is non-sensual, it must reside in the soul somewhere. In fact, it must be an attribute of the soul substance; of its very essence. There is no other conclusion to which we can come.

It would appear, then, from our probing into the nature of the soul, that the feeling of joy is a part of its natural rhythm. The reason why we so rarely become aware of this natural feeling is because as a rule it lies smothered under a burden of worries foreign to the soul's real nature. We manage to banish them sometimes, and it is at those times that we catch glimpses of its natural joy, in the shape of the emotion of freedom. The Fathers seem to understand the nature of joy very well; that it arises when the burden of worry that presses on the soul is relaxed and lightened. Clement writes that "exultation is said to be gladness, being a reflection of the virtue which is according to the truth through a kind of exhilaration and relaxation of the soul."

From our analysis of happiness and pleasure it would seem as if all external objects are potent causes of worry and in the nature of a burden on the soul, because they must first be acquired, then protected and retained. If the mind were to lose its sense of attachment for them the soul would be released from all its burdens of worry, and its own innate joy would well up freely and naturally. It seems then that with the removal of all desires the soul would enjoy unending happiness. When the soul is free of its body and stands by itself in its own pure spirit and nature it is no longer liable to experience worry in any shape or form. The physical appetites of the body are gone, and the desires which fasten themselves on these appetites. Its inner happiness then remains for ever unmarred by cravings, desires, worries, appetites. It enjoys uncontaminated bliss, a pure ecstasy of delight which is divine, unabating, uninterruptible, because it is an attribute of the soul substance. Our conclusion is apparently the same as that arrived at by the Fathers. "This present and corporeal life cannot be happy," writes Lactantius, "because it is subject to evils through the body . . . . . . For a state of happiness ought to be perfect, so that there be nothing which can harass, or lessen, or change it. Nor can any thing be judged happy in other respects, unless it be incorruptible. But nothing is incorruptible but that which is immortal. Immortality, therefore, is alone happy,

because it can neither be corrupted nor destroyed......... The chief good is, therefore, found to be immortality." We can now see why there is no such thing as spiritual pain; and that pleasure and pain are simply modifications of the soul's innate capacity for joy.

To sum up. We have seen in this chapter that pleasure is of the senses; tantalising and short-lived. That joy is an emotion manifested in consequence of some lasting good; that is, when the soul is freed from a certain measure of bondage and limitation. That the emotion of joy wells up when we realise for certain that never again need we strive for exactly the same thing. That it is the sense of freedom from future worry and strain which is the direct cause of joy.

Man has, of course, a free hand when it comes to deciding which kind of happiness he will choose. Obviously he cannot have both; when he chooses one it is at the expense of the other. Here he is again reminded that he cannot serve both God and Mammon. He may prefer to live as a soul shut up in a body when he can experience the all too-fleeting pleasures of the senses, with all the trouble and pain involved in securing them. He may prefer to struggle for the happiness of freedom from desire that he would attain as a pure soul. The choice is his; just as it was Christ's.

Tertullian puts the choice before him with forceful expression. "Thou art too dainty, Christian, if thou wouldst have pleasure in this life as well as in the next; nay, a fool thou art, if thou thinkest this life's pleasures to be really pleasures The philosophers, for instance, give the name of pleasure to quietness and repose; in that they have their bliss; in that they find entertainment; they even glory in it. You long for the goal, the stage, and the dust, and the place of combat! I would have you answer me this question: Can we not live without pleasure, who cannot but with pleasure die? For what is our wish but the apostle's, to leave the world, and be taken up into the fellowship of the Lord? You have your joys where you have your longing . . . What greater pleasure than distaste of pleasure itself, than contempt for all that the world can give, than true liberty, than a pure conscience, a contented life, and freedom from all fear of death?"

CHAPTER IV.

Thus far we have learnt that the soul exists; that it is immortal and capable of a separate existence of its own; that without the body happiness is natural to it. What is more, we have seen that this is entirely in keeping with the esoteric teaching of the first Christians. Let us examine the soul now from another angle—that of knowledge, the pursuit of which ranks for most of us next to that of happiness itself. We shall, in fact, endeavour to discover if knowledge, like happiness, is an attribute of the soul.

We must begin by making perfectly clear to ourselves exactly what knowledge is. Most people look upon as some mysterious thing too subtle and elusive to be understood or comprehended by mere mortal intellects. This is only because they have never given a thought to its nature or constitution. What knowledge is in itself and apart from its content, is a question that has not even occurred to them to ask. The Christian Teachers however, seem to have satisfied themselves as to the nature of knowledge, for we find Clement writing: "And knowledge is essentially a contemplation of existences on the part of the soul, either of a certain thing or of certain things, and when perfected of all together." According to the practice to which we are adhering we will not accept this assertion at its own face value. Let us proceed to examine the subject for ourselves. Then we shall see whether the conclusion arrived at from our own reasoning coincides with Clement's teaching.

We need, first of all, to discriminate between knowledge and the objects of knowledge, the description of knowledge, and the content or details of knowledge. All things must necessarily be objects of knowledge. Knowledge itself can be the object of knowledge. Why not? What can never be known by anyone can never be proved to exist, and therefore, does not exist. How can anyone prove that of which he has not the least idea? And how can we assume the existence of a thing when we cannot prove that it is existing? For these reasons all things can be known. Knowledge is different from

the object of knowledge in that one is the knower and the other that which is known. As an aside, it is interesting to note that there is only one instance in which it is possible for them to assume the same identity. That is when the knower turns inward to investigate his own nature. In other words, when the knower wishes to learn something of himself. In this instance the knower then knows himself to be knowing himself. More simply, he knows that he knows.

To continue with our investigation into the nature of knowledge. We need to realise also that the description of knowledge is not knowledge itself. As a rule it is found contained in books and other forms of scripts. But does knowledge dwell in books? If it does, then why is it that rats and ants do not become possessors of the knowledge contained in the books they sometimes eat? It happens not infrequently that even the readers of books do not absorb any of the knowledge that they contain. From this we can understand that knowledge is not the description of knowledge. Neither can knowledge be the detail of knowledge. The various branches and departments that go to make up knowledge are taken to be the content of knowledge; and they, too, are only different forms of the description of knowledge.

What is it then? In philosophical language knowledge is a state of consciousness, a state of awareness, on the part of the soul. To put it differently, it is a kind of conscious experience. Knowledge cannot be found apart from the knower, for it is not a thing outside of the soul's understanding. If knowledge could be separated from the knower, or dissected, or if a state of consciousness could be broken into parts, complete insensibility would supervene at once. Moreover, we know external things because they provoke in us, or call out of our minds, certain states or aspects of consciousness. If these were separate from consciousness itself, they would need other aspects or states through which they could be known. That this is so is because we can know the things that are separate and distinct from us only through the states or aspects that they rouse in us; that is, in our consciousness. It can be seen, therefore, that states of consciousness are either the forms or the modifications of intelli-

gence or understanding. Conscious experience, that is to say sensation or feeling of awareness, is the hall-mark of knowledge. Acting on these inferences, we find that our conclusion does in fact agree with that of Clement's.

We have learnt then, the nature of knowledge and whence it comes. We may now proceed in the scientific manner we have adopted to bring to the light of day the characteristics of knowledge, and the way in which it is evoked. We refer again to the Christian writings, to learn from them that the mind, the source of all intellectual activity, is the 'agent' of the soul. Let me give you the theory they hold in their own words. Tertullian it is who writes: "We, however, affirm that the mind coalesces with the soul—not indeed as being distinct from it in substance, but as being its natural function and agent." It is now our business to discover what truth there is in his declaration.

We can state at once that knowledge, or consciousness, is not matter. Matter is possessed of properties that can be known by the senses—such as smell, colour, sound, and so on. Consciousness, on the other hand, has none of the qualities that can be known by the senses, though it knows all sensible qualities. It has no colour, though it reveals all colours. It has no taste, though it knows all tastes. Neither has it smell, nor sound. In addition, it has no weight, nor other tactile properties such as roughness, smoothness, heat and the like, though it can acquire knowledge of all kinds of tactile qualities.

Further more, knowledge is unitary in its composition. Even when we talk of two ideas they are not two ni reality. Not even when they occur in succession. If ideas could flow separately from one another in consciousness, or exist in it as so many unconnected, independent entities, like pebbles on the seashore or photographs in an album, they could not be known. Why could they not? Because each idea would be something separate from consciousness, and not one of its states. Nor, in any sense, are our ideas pictures of objects. They are not like reflections in a mirror. Only sight, of the five senses, gives rise to images that are perceived. Besides, a reflection is a material thing, the effect of a throwing

back of rays of light on to themselves. But conscious ideas are not rays of light reflected in a mirror. As we have already perceived, they are feelings of awareness, that is, states or aspects of our faculty of knowledge.

The human body has no mirror that can reflect ideas on to the soul, or understanding. The sight of a landscape stretching out before the eyes, many miles in length and breadth, would be perceived as a tiny scene in miniature, if it were only a reflection on the pupil of the eye. The soul does not possess a magnifying lens through which it can look at the picture imprinted by the landscape on the retinae. If we take into consideration the fact that knowledge is not the reflection of an object on a sense-organ but a state of the soul's own consciousness, we must surely acknowledge that soul and knowledge are synonymous terms. As it was pointed out in the previous chapter, the soul is not a storehouse in which things can be packed. Therefore it must be that soul and knowledge are different names for the same thing, and we have to recognise that the soul is an intelligent substance by nature. Because it is a partless thing and intelligent, it is knowledge through and through, over every part of its surface.

Thus, from our own logical thinking we may conclude with the Teachers that the mind is indeed the 'natural function and agent' of the soul. As Tertullian states : "The soul, in my opinion, is sensual (knowing).* Nothing, therefore, pertaining to the soul is unconnected with sense, nothing pertaining to sense is unconnected with the soul."

To continue. It is a fact, in the case of a soul enclosed in a body, that an external object can act as a stimulus to it. The function of a stimulus emanating from an object is merely to give a knock on the door of consciousness, thereby, challenging the attention. This is a necessary connecting link between the object and the soul. In the soul there lies an item of knowledge—an idea—corresponding in respect of its rate, pitch and intensity of vibrations to the vibrations, or stimulus

*My brackets.

coming from the outside object. This is stirred into activity. The idea thus provoked, rouses itself as it were, from its quiescent state in the sub-conscious mind and appears in the limelight of consciousness in response to the knock. Put plainly, consciousness itself manifests and displays the form of the object it perceives.

It is worth while to learn exactly how the mechanism of perception works. It consists of three parts, the senses, the sensory nerves and centres and the response of the individual consciousness. The stimules transmitted by the external object is received by the senses. It travels along the sensory nerves in the form of vibratory motion or agitation. Conciousness then responds to it with its own innate ideas or items of knowledge. In this way cognition is had. For instance, I look out over the sea and I see a boat. The stimulus sent out by the boat—the object—in the form of vibrating agitations impinges itself on my eyes. It then travels along the optic nerve and knocks on the door of the perceptive centre in the brain. The idea of a boat that is lying dormant in my consciousness is then roused in me. Automatically I respond by 'seeing' the boat. This is how I become conscious of it.

Had my attention been engaged elsewhere the outside stimulus would have passed by me unheeded. The absence of any one of the three parts of the mechanism would make perception impossible. If there were no stimulus the idea of the boat would have remained unawakened. Consequently I would have failed to take cognisance of it. It is the same with the sensory system. Its absences too, would be fatal to perception. Even so, though the object, the stimulus and the sensory system taken together may be perfect, they will fail to give perception if there is no soul, with its consciousness and ideas, at the back of the perceptive centres. The sensory nerves themselves do not perceive the agitation that they communicate. If they did we should be conscious of the object as it travelled along the route of the excitation.

Thus we perceive that knowledge is only another word for consciousness; that it pertains to the nature of the soul and comes therefore from within. As Gregory

Thaumaturgus picturesquely puts it: "The soul's knowledge of these things does not come to it from without, but it rather sets out these things, as it were, with the adornment of its own thoughts." Clement also confirms us in our new-drawn conclusions for we find him in his Homilies asserting: "And thus knowledge comes to one, not because he has been instructed, but because he has understood." That, of course, is perfectly true. You can instruct a person and endeavour to cram into him as many facts as you like, but unless he has perceived and understood he will learn nothing. As we have just seen, it is impossible to push knowledge into a person. It must be drawn out from within him and presented to his understanding. Only then will he have 'learnt.'

While we are still discussing the subject it is illuminating to examine the views on knowledge held by thinkers of our own time. Many modern psychologists, reared in the cradle of materialism, have inclined toward the notion that knowledge is a product of matter and is somehow bound up with the convolutions of the brain. But of late they have begun to realise that their position is untenable and have been forced to admit that though they may know how to classify knowledge, they know little or nothing about consciousness. I may add that they know nothing about perception. Professor McDougall openly admits the defeat of Science in this respect. In his book, "Modern Materialism and Emergent Evolution," he states: "It is true that we do not know, and probably never shall know or be able to understand how the physical stimulus to a sense-organ or nerve evokes or results in a sensation, an idea, or a representation." Two other modern thinkers, Professors Halliburton and McDowall, have also acknowledged their failure to throw any light on the subject. In "A Handbook of Physiology," written jointly by them, they say: "The conscious state is of great general interest and medical importance, but unfortunately we are far from a clear understanding of its nature."

We can examine the materialistic view-point for ourselves and see why it is absurd. Its contention is that consciousness is a product of the brain; that it is the result of the activity of nerve cells. The materialists

have discovered the working of certain physiological processes and have attempted to draw an analogy. We know that bile is a product of the liver, they say, therefore in the same way consciousness must be a product of the activity of brain centres and nerve cells. They are ridiculously wrong. As we have seen, consciousness is an independent entity and a function of the soul. But even the materialists have begun to see the absurdity of their reasoning and the idea is being abandoned.

McDougall, in the book from which I have just quoted, refutes the idea completely. He writes: "In general, it may be said, the evidence supports the view that in some sense the brain functions as a whole; and that, when one part is destroyed, other parts can in a surprising manner take over as it were the impaired functions; or, at least, the impaired functions are restored and become correlated with parts of the brain other than those with which they were originally or normally correlated. These facts are far more opposed to the view that function depends altogether on material structure than are the instances of regeneration of bodily organs and functions. For in these cerebral instances, the different parts of the structure are not regenerated".

Halliburton and McDowall also refuse to give credence to the belief. In their book they write: "It is sometimes argued that states of consciousness are the product of the activity of nerve cells, just as bile is a product of the activity of the liver cells, or as contraction results from the activity of the muscle fibre. But this analogy will not bear close investigation There is no difficulty in accepting the statement that bile is secreted by the liver; in this case the product is physical, and it is produced by physiological (i. e. presumably by chemical and physical) conditions. On the other hand, if we state that consciousness is secreted by the brain, we are linking together two sets of phenomena, the psychical and the physiological, between which a connection is inconceivable. Consequently, instead of stating that physiological activity is the cause of mental (psychical) activity, it is more satisfactory to assume that the two activities run

parallel with one another, and to recognise that the nature of their relation is unknown."

We may here also examine the belief of those who hold the view that ideas are composed of some kind of mental dust or mind stuff. If this is so then who is going to mould it into shape, keeping the combinations always correct and exact? But let us assume for a moment that there is 'mind stuff.' If the particle of this stuff is endowed with consciousness, then every particle of it is full and complete in itself. This is because knowledge and ideas cannot be transferred from one being to another. They must be called forth from the understanding. If the understanding is devoid of them, there is an end to the matter. At best, it could be nothing better than a mirror. It might reflect anything that was immediately before it, but it could know nothing itself. If, on the other hand, it is assumed that these particles of mind stuff are unconscious, then no amount of metaphysical jugglery will ever get consciousness out of them. It is simply not possible to create consciousness from unconscious matter.

Professor Bowne, more clear-headed than most modern philosophers, is the one thinker who has most nearly stumbled upon the truth. Even so he is still far from daylight. In his book "Metaphys'cs" he states: "The immediate antecedents of sensation and perception are a series of nervous changes in the brain. Whatever we know of the outer world is revealed only in and through these nervous changes. But these are totally unlike the objects assumed to exist as their causes." Bowne's views are penetrating enough to constitute a death-blow to superficial thinking, for he adds: "All talk of pictures, impressions, etc.; ceases because of the lack of all the conditions to give such figures any meaning". He comes near to the truth when he concludes by saying : "Nervous signs are the raw material of all knowledge of the outer world, according to the most decided realism. But in order to pass beyond these signs into a knowledge of the outer world, we must posit an interpreter who shall read back these signs into their objective meaning. But that interpreter, again, must implicitly contain the meaning of the universe within itself; and these signs are really but

excitations which cause the soul to unfold what is within itself. Inasmuch as by common consent the soul communicates with the outer world only through these signs, and never comes nearer to the object than such signs can bring it, it follows that the principles of interpretation must be in the mind itself, and that the resulting construction is primarily only an expression of the mind's own nature. All reaction is of this sort; it expresses the nature of the reacting agent, and knowledge comes under the same head."

Before we proceed to study knowledge from another aspect I should like to point out that all living beings are endowed with two kinds of consciousness. These are perception, and the understanding or appreciation of what is perceived. For example, to see a banana as an object and to know it as an article of food. The second kind of consciousness also includes the significancy of sounds—words—which is the prerogative of higher forms of life only. But there is no form of life that does not, in however crude or blind a manner, possess these two kinds of knowledge, which may be called perception and apperception. The most rudimentary forms of life know what is food and what is not. Of course, in their case the form of consciousness displayed is purely instinctive. This difference of degrees of conscious manifestation among the different forms of life arises from the corrupting influence of matter. Later on we shall see why. It is sufficient here to say that these differences constitute no argument against the theory of consciousness that we have formulated.

We come now to the question of the free soul and its capacity for knowing. Will the soul's faculty of knowing become more, or less, with the severance of its connection with the flesh ? Will there be light or darkness ? Or a mixture of both, as there is when body and soul are in partnership together ? Again we turn to the Scriptures, to see what more they will yield us in regard to the knowing capacity of the soul. In the Gospel of St.Matthew we have Christ telling us : "Ye are the light of the world." "According to St. John, he assures us : "The Holy Ghost ....shall teach you all things." Again, St. Luke reports

him as teaching: "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known." It seems clear to me that Christ is telling us that we are capable of being omniscient. Astonishing, this, for the majority of us who realise that as we are we know so very little. Think what it would mean. To know all the things and events of the universe, past, present and future. To be truly clairvoyant. Even to pass beyond such things. To be a prophet and see the future. These endowments would be ours, were we indeed all-knowing. Certain it is that as we are, in the flesh, we are far from being so. Those words of Christ were spoken with reference to the freed, perfect soul, regarding whom St. Paul says: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Let us see whether there is any evidence available that will enable us to form an opinion of our own. We may hope and trust that what Christ says is true. But faith is not enough. The intelligent, enquiring mind must know for itself exactly why and how it is so.

The argument that proves omniscience to be an attribute of the pure soul is very simple. It is based on the uniformity of nature, as all Science is. Nature is constant. So that the attributes and properties of substances cannot vary; they are always the same. It is a natural law that all things belonging to the same species, class, genus, etc. have a common nature. Gold, for instance, will always be found to be gold. That is to say, one piece of gold is always like any other piece of gold. There are no differences in the pure metal. This is the case with all substances.

The soul being a substance is not, and cannot be, an exception to this law. Therefore the properties of the soul, the intelligent substance, are alike in every case. So it must be that all souls are alike in respect of their knowing capacity. This is tantamount to saying that every soul has within itself the ability to manifest the entirety of knowledge. The soul can know all things and all conditions of things, of all places, of all times. For what one soul knows, or knew, or will ever know can be known by any other soul. All knowledge acquired

by anyone in the past can be known by anyone living today. Similarly, all knowledge known by anyone living to-day and all the knowledge which will ever be acquired by any knowing, living being in the future, can be known by every one of us. Thus knowledge of the three periods of time is possible for all. Nor can localisation in space set a limit to our knowledge.

That being the case I think we are entitled to conclude that every soul has an infinite capacity in respect of knowledge. That every soul, in short, is capable of omniscience. What is more, omniiscence—knowledge that is all-embracing—cannot be limited by anything that we may regard as unknowable. Many things remain unknown at the present time. That does not mean that it is to be inferred that they will always remain unknown. It is indisputable that what can never be known by capable minds engaged in investigating the truth will never be proved to have an existence, and therefore is non-existent.

Now that the secret of knowledge lies exposed before our eyes we come to three conclusions. One, that knowledge, consisting as it does in states of consciousness alone, cannot exist independently of the soul. Two, that in respect of states of consciousness—knowledge—all souls have the same capacity. So that what is known by one soul can be known by any other. Three, that since there is no such thing as the unknowable there dwells in each and every soul knowledge of the entirety of the universe in respect of the three periods of time, past, present and future. As I have already stated, the knowing capacity of the soul is restricted in respect of its functions by the physical body. In a later chapter I hope to demonstrate the action of matter on the soul and to show how it is that matter is detrimental to its perfect functioning.

We can now turn to the Christian Fathers to see what they have to say on this subject of omniscience. From the Prophetic Scriptures we see that they believe in the omniscience of man and hope to attain it themselves at some future time. "As to knowledge, some elements of it we already possess; others, by what we do possess, we firmly hope [to attain]. For neither have we

attained all, nor do we lack all. But we have received, as it were, an earnest of the eternal blessings, and of ancestral riches." In his Homilies we find Clement writing: "I learned that revelation is knowledge gained without instruction, and without apparitions and dreams. And this is indeed the case. For in the soul . . . . is all the truth." Again, he quotes 'Peter' as teaching: ". . . . it is impossible for anyone except a prophet, who alone has omniscience, to know with respect to the things that are done by anyone, which are his own, and which are not; for all are seen as done by him." Clement tells us further, in a passage which I cited at the beginning of this chapter, that knowledge when perfected is of all things together. This, pure and simple, is omniscience. From these extracts of their writings we see that the first teachers of Christianity accept Christ's teaching as to the omniscience of the soul and themselves teach to that effect.

CHAPTER V.

With the aid of the Scriptures and our own reasoning powers we have by now come to some understanding of the soul. With such evidence as we have produced we cannot refrain from believing that the soul possesses the attribute of immortal life. Supreme joy; all-embracing knowledge; infinite power, because it cannot be hurt or destroyed, mutilated or damaged by any outside force with respect to its natural functions, are all prerogatires of the soul; even though we realise that at the present time they are not manifesting themselves. But surely such qualities are the attributes of divinity? What being, however divine, is endowed with more worshipful qualities than these? There can be no greater divinity than one who manifests all these supreme faculties. They are Godlike. The qualities of a God. Is it possible that the soul is divine? Is a God? Equal to God himself? Let us hurry to the Scriptures; we may be presuming too much. The soul a God? We must find out what the Teachers have to say on the subject.

On studying the New Testament we discover many expressions of belief in the divinity of the soul. The Teachers confirm it openly, again and again. It is true that each statement appears abruptly, standing isolated, surrounded on all sides by irrelevent matter. It is not often that a statement has any real connection with anything going before, or coming after. This makes its real meaning difficult to see, and rarely is it properly appreciated and understood. We know now why this is so; that it is intentional, part of a careful plan. Yet there are many beautiful passages in the 'Testament' of the Apostles that express clearly their opinion of the soul's divinity. Carefully read they leave no doubt in the mind. The creed they expound cannot be otherwise than true.

Listen to the teaching of St. John. He says in his Epistle: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Here we have John telling us that we are the sons of God. That when God shall come to us

we shall see him as he is, and we shall be like him. It is impossible to believe that the son of a father who is God can fail to be possessed of his father's godly qualities. Is it likely that John would call us sons of God unless we were of the same nature as God? When a man adopts a boy and takes him into his home he usually calls him 'son'. But when he takes a dog he does not call it his son, however fond of the animal he may be. We may suppose that it was Christ himself who taught the disciples that the essence of man was divine. For in his Gospel John, bursting with joy of the truth within him, relaxes his need for caution. He comes more into the open and repeats boldly Christ's own teaching. "I said, Ye are Gods." We are actually Gods, it seems; not only sons of God In his first Epistle John tells us, further, "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." We find that his assertion is based on Christ's teaching. In the Gospel according to St. Luke, Christ says: "for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Once more, in different phraseology, we are assured that the same nature is in us that is in God. We see that St. Paul, too, accepts Christ's dictum, for he asks; "And know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

St. James also believes in the divinity of the soul. There is a phrase in his Epistle which shows that he believes it possible for men to become 'perfect and entire'. It is: "that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." It looks as though this too is based on the Master's teaching. In the Gospel according to St. Matthew he bids us: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Again God is said to be our Father, and we are exhorted to be perfect like him. And how are we to attain to the perfection of God, if we are not of his nature? How can we strive to perfect ourselves, if the qualities of perfection are not in us? These qualities must be there, however deeply they may be buried. The perfect cannot be created from the imperfect. The silk purse is not produced from the ear of the finest sow. On this point, too, St. Paul is in agreement with Christ. He, too, believes in the possibility of man perfecting himself. He seems to have no doubts on

the matter. He writes: "Till we all come........unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

It is now time to turn to the Fathers, the first real exponents of Christianity, and for this reason it is very necessary that we ascertain their views. Did they accept and believe in Christ's teaching of the divinity of man? After examining their writings it is easy to conclude that they did. Clement expresses his conviction clearly, in unequivocal language that allows of no misunderstanding. "It is then, as appears, the greatest of all lessons to know one's self. For if one knows himself he will know God; and knowing God, he will be made like God." It is Hippolytus who declares with enthusiasm: "If therefore man has become immortal he will also be God....Wherefore I preach to this effect: Come, all ye kindreds of the nation to the immortality of the baptism." These expressions of opinion are clear enough, and need no explanation. We turn again to Clement to find him describing Christ as "the husbandman of God, having bestowed on us the truly great, divine, and inalienable inheritance of the Father, deifying man by heavenly teaching." He thinks of Christ as the husbandman of God because he brought to men knowledge of their divine inheritance, that having received it they might strive to bring their divinity into realisation.

Thus we have collected information from all the most authoritative Christian sources regarding the vital question. We have seen that Christ, the Apostles, the Fathers, are all agreed as to the soul's divine nature. I think we have no alternative but to admit that their teaching is correct. There is no valid reason whatsoever for making a distinction between us and God. Spirit is spirit. Always it has the same nature. The God-spirit is one that has freed itself from the material impurities. By so doing it is enabled to manifest its divinity in full, unhampered. The unemancipated spirit is one which remains locked fast in its bonds, fettered, unable to manifest its divinity. It is not merely that man is potentially a God, he is actually one. The divine attributes are not residing in him as potentialities, as seeds waiting to be nurtured

before they can grow and blossom forth in all fullness. They are there in all the full power of their strength. As St. John has it in his Gospel. 'And of his fullness have we all received, and grace for grace.' Not one divine quality is wanting, otherwise the beautiful phrase 'grace for grace' would be meaningless. It is the presence of the body that obstructs their proper functioning; so that immortal life is crippled and strangled by the liability to bodily death; everlasting bliss is translated into occasional feelings of pleasure or more rarely, passing moments of joy; and omniscience becomes at the best mere half-knowledge, at the worst most dire ignorance. Nevertheless, as we have seen, in their inherent nature man and God are exactly the same, in every respect. The soul is its own God. Lest we still feel that we presume too much when we call ourselves Gods and put ourselves on a level with God, we may seek for further corroboration from the Scriptures.

It is in the writings of the Fathers that we find the situation summed up with consummate artistry; with that philosophic exactness and economy of words for which the Fathers are admired by all who know their writings. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus had already said: "Men are Gods, and Gods are men." Clement, in quoting him, expresses agreement with him and adds: "For the Word Himself is the manifest mystery: God in man, and man in God. And the mediator . . . is the Word, who is common to both—the Son of God, the Saviour of men; His servant, our Teacher." When we return to the New Testament it is to see St. Paul urging men to "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." He wants men to know the love of Christ, that they may receive his message and therewith realise the God that is in them.

The fact that all souls are alike is stressed both by the Apostles and the Fathers. It is St. John who says in speaking of our relationship to Christ: "As he is, so are we in this world." Christ himself sweeps away all differences when he declares: "Ye are the light of the world." These words are meant for all who are open to receive them. Clement states his opinion plainly and tersely when he says: "For souls themselves by themselves

are equal." One pure soul is the same as any other pure soul. The next passage that I have taken from Clement's writings is less easy to understand. He says: "For this cause did the Son of God descend and take on Him a body, not that the soul might discover itself in Christ, but Christ in itself." Here the true meaning is obscured by the use of language that is purposely designed to be ambiguous. Wherefore the uninitiated may be readily forgiven for failing to comprehend its real purport. Clement thinks that it was to bring enlightenment to man regarding his true nature that Christ was born as man. Not, as Clement is careful to point out, that man might be redeemed in an external Christ. But that he might learn that a Christ—a Saviour—was in himself; ready to bring him to the state of perfect being. This is the crucial point.

We cannot lean on any other soul, however perfect and divine, and expect to be saved. It is a fallacy to think of Christ or God as one "in whom we live and move and have our being" It can be said that the fishes of the sea live and move and have their being in the sea. Does it avail them anything? Immortality is not conferred on them. Nor are they immune from the possibility of being devoured by others of their species; or of being caught by them. But why stop at fishes? Consider our own case. There are Christians who tell me that through their love of Christ they "live and move and have their being" in him. But is their lot any better than mine? Have they that supreme happiness that I hanker after? Have they the all-embracing knowledge that I am striving for? And power? Have they any more power than I? Have they conquered death? So that unlike me they have no death to face? Are they, in fact, any the better for believing that they are living and moving and having their being in a God? Some people to-day even claim to having met Christ. If this is not self-delusion I do not know what is. Have they anything to show after meeting a Son of God, a God in his own right? There should have been some wonderful change in them after such an experience. Since there is not I can only say that it is a plain case for the psycho-analyst.

There is no justification for thinking that two existing realities could ever fulfil the relationship implied in that phrase. The plain truth is that it has a metaphorical meaning and not a literal one. It has no reference to any relationship between a spirit however pure and magnificent, and one that is impure and crippled. The real meaning is that the human mind should fill itself to saturation point with the Ideal of the Christ that is the Saviour. When the soul is completely immersed in contemplation of this great ideal, then indeed it lives and moves and has its being—in that Ideal. The Saviour, the Christ, is in us; waiting to be discovered. The purpose of Christ's teaching was to help us make that discovery; to bring to us that knowledge. That we might learn that the way to redemption is in each of us.

There are others amongst the Fathers who understand and believe in the uniformity of soul nature. Tertullian, with the philosopher's lucidity, says, "And here, therefore, we draw our conclusion, that all the natural properties of the soul are inherent in it as parts of its substance." Origen clinches the matter when he says: "Every one who participates in anything is unquestionably of one essence and nature with him who is the partaker of the same thing . . . . Every mind which partakes of intellectual light ought undoubtedly to be of one nature with every mind which partakes in a similar manner of intellectual light. If the heavenly virtues, then, partake of intellectual light, *i. e.* of divine nature, because they participate in wisdom and holiness, and if human souls have partaken of the same light and wisdom, and thus are mutually of one nature and of one essence . . . . then, since the heavenly virtues are incorruptible and immortal, the essence of the human soul will also be immortal and in corruptible."

But the last word on the subject is St. Paul's. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

The Apostles and the Fathers alike are anxious that men should understand the full significance of their nature. For this reason the term 'God' is defined very

clearly in the New Testament. "He called them Gods unto whom the word of God came." It is John who writes thus, in his Gospel. He means that Christ called those men Gods who believed in the word of God that they were Gods. The importance of this is that although all are divine by nature only those souls can attain to that divinity who believe that they are divine. Only he who understands himself can ever proceed systematically to realise himself and bring his inborn, inherent Godhood into manifestation. We must surely now agree with Hippolytus when he says: "For once the crown of righteousness encircles thy brow, thou hast become God .... Thou hast been deified and begotten unto immortality.... This constitutes 'Know thyself', or in other words, learn to discover God within thyself."

This doctrine of soul nature that we have succeeded in unravelling in these pages was known as the teaching of the Gnostics. The Gnostics, therefore, are the exponents of Religious—the Science of Salvation. This teaching was rejected for various reasons by Christian theologians, who never gave it proper or adequate thought. These men stood in superstitious awe of God. According to their idea of a supreme being, God might become very angry if man dared to call himself a God. As it was never possible for the Teachers to express themselves freely it was a doubly difficult task to allay this fear. In fact, so great was their fear of God, the Churchmen hurried away from the doctrine without pausing long enough to consider whether or not there might be any truth in it. With the result that they never got anywhere near a truly scientific conception of the soul. Added to this, to make things worse, there was confusion about the connotation of the term "Gnostic", and the assumption arose that the Ante Nicene Fathers were not themselves Gnostics. In the first Christian communities there were two classes of Gnostics. There were those who followed an unintelligible mystical doctrine which was rightly rejected, and those who taught the scientific views that have been elaborated here.

From their writings it is easy to see that the Ante Nicene Fathers belonged to the second category. We find that Clement writes: "The Gnostic will avail himself

of dialectics, fixing on the distinction of genera into species, and will master the distinction of existences, till he come to what are primary and simple." In another place he writes: "On this wise it is possible for the Gnostic already to have become God." In the prophetic Scriptures, comprised in the Syrian Documents, we find: "So also scientific knowledge [Gnosis], shedding its light and brightness on things, shows, itself to be in truth the divine wisdom, the pure light, which illumines the men whose eyeball is clear, unto the sure vision and comprehension of truth."

The doctrine is entirely scientific, as the founders and exponents of Christianity well knew. It is said in St. John's Gospel: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Truth is always scientific. If it is not, it will be untruth; or a mixture of truth and untruth. Clement lays his finger on the weak spot in men's philosophising when he says: "The cause of all error and false opinion is the inability to distinguish in what respect things are common and in what respect they differ." Here is an invitation to consider in what way a soul resembles God. It will be found that in all its natural attributes it is exactly like God. The only way in which it differs from God is that it bears the burden of a physical body, from which God is free. It is this body that subjects the soul to the limitation, frustration and pain from which it suffers. From which we understand that if the soul were rid of this source of trouble and misfortune it would be a God. Like God. This is the scientific explanation which was well-known to every properly-instructed teacher of Christianity. St. Paul is full of withering scorn for the materialistic sciences. In a warning to Timothy he cries: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called." In the Clementine Homilies too, there is an injunction to abjure the company of the learned ignoramus. "For those who are full of evil learning, even with their breath infect as with madness, those who associate with them, with their own passions, and what is worse, whoever is most instructed among them is so much turned from the judgment which is according to nature."

The Christian Fathers sound a solemn note of warning against rejecting the truth. In the Prophetic Scriptures it is written: "I know that the mysteries of Science are a laughing-stock to many....and a few are at first startled at them, as the light is suddenly brought into a convivial party in the dark." Says the wise Clement in warning: "he that is uninstructed in the word, has ignorance as the excuse of his error; but as for him into whose ears instruction has been poured, and who deliberately maintains his incredulity in his soul, the wiser he appears to be, the more harm will his understanding do him; for he has his own sense as his accuser for not having chosen the best part. For man has otherwise been constituted by nature, so as to have fellowship with God." And so, he adds: "Let no one then despise the word, lest he unwittingly despise himself."

Let a further extract from Clement's writings end this chapter ..... "ye who have His image in your bodies, have in like manner the likeness of His judgment in your minds. Since, then, by acting like irrational animals, you have lost the soul of man from your soul, becoming like swine, you are the prey of demons. If, therefore, you receive the law of God, you become men, for it cannot be said to irrational animals, 'Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal,' and so forth. Therefore, do not refuse, when invited, to return to your first nobility; for it is possible, if ye be conformed to God by good works. And being accounted to be sons by reason of your likeness to Him, you shall be reinstated as lords of all."

CHAPTER VI.

In the last chapter we saw the soul established as a divine being by nature. This brings us to a question that must be predominant in every mind. If we are divine by nature, and it seems from our revelations that we cannot be otherwise, then how do we account for the glaring discrepancies between our natural greatness and our present lack of it? It must now be our purpose to find the answer to this question. We are firmly embarked on the road of rational thinking and it must be possible to discover the reason for the obvious difference between ourselves as we are, and as we might be were we free to display our real nature. From what has gone before we are ready to accept the belief that the pure soul is immortal, joyful, omniscient. On the other hand we know that we are mortal, miserable, ignorant. How have we come to be reduced to this degrading state of inferiority where the fear of death always hangs over us, where we strive unsuccessfully for complete happiness, where we fail constantly to break through the dense fog of ignorance that obscures the light of knowledge?

In accordance with our usual custom we will turn to the Scriptures for help in clearing up the matter. In his Epistle to the Romans Paul announces his belief that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We are seeking, then, to discover in what manner we have sinned and thereby fallen short of the glory of God. In every way we are like him; with one exception. He has no physical body. It must be in that fact that the solution to the problem lies. The body is the one thing that differentiates us from God. Then there is only one interpretation to be placed on Paul's assertion that all have sinned. The possession of the body is a sin. Origen goes so far as to declare that "no one is clean from filthiness, not even if his life lasted but a single day." So full of evil is the flesh, so inimical is it to the spirit that if a soul is associated with a body for so short a time as a day, it is polluted. It is easy to see that the first Christians regard the body as the source of the soul's sufferings and limitations. They call it sinful because they look upon it as being the only cause of the soul's

misfortune, and of the loss of its divine status. The true Christian view seems to be that spirit and flesh are of opposite natures and directly opposed to each other. Furthermore, it was understood that the soul's embodiment in flesh, made as it is from matter, stands in the way of the realisation of its inborn divinity. The Teachers thought of the flesh as an implacable enemy of the soul; a fatal curse. So much so, indeed, that St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians calls it 'vile.'

We shall continue to seek what more the Scriptures have to say concerning this combination of soul and body that we may learn how the body affects the functioning of the soul's powers. We saw established the fact that perfect happiness is the prerogative of a pure soul. In direct contrast to this we are told by Christ in John's Gospel that "in the world ye shall have tribulation." It seems that we must take it for granted that as long as we are in the flesh we may expect trial and sorrow. Paul apparently takes the same view. In fact, in his Epistle to the Romans he is quite bowed down by the troubles of all living beings. "For we know that the whole of creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain," he laments. No doubt most men judging from their own experience would agree with him. Has not the world been called "this vale of tears"? At best, and to say the very least, the lot of man is full of "ups and downs." With considerably more "downs" than "ups," and the certain knowledge that death will swoop down to finish everything. It seems from what Christ and St. Paul say that our inherent blissfulness will remain unrealised while we continue to dwell in the world as men. And apparently the Fathers think the same, if we go by what Clement says: "The soul is not capable of suffering without the Flesh."

When we refer further to the Fathers it is to see that they also look upon the body as a hindrance to the soul's proper functioning. In their opinion it curtails its natural faculty of omniscience. Clement points out that flesh " . . separates and limits the knowledge of those that are spiritual," and that "bound in this earthly body we apprehend the objects of sense [knowledge]* by means

*my brackets.

of the body." Origen thinks that "the mental acumen of those who are in the body seems to be blunted by the nature of corporeal matter."

According to the Apostle Paul there is not one redeeming feature to give us cause for rejoicing in the incorporation of the soul in a body. "For there is not a just man upon earth," he writes, "that doeth good, and sinneth not." It appears from the Teachers' observations that the soul is stunted, and its functions vitiated, by the imposition of the body. Small wonder then, that the founders of Christianity regarded the body as an evil influence corrupting and crippling the soul. Their condemnation of its corrupting influence surely reaches its culminating point in Paul when he cries out: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Could he be more earnest in his loathing of the "body of this death?"

The writings of Hippolytus provide us with an excellent illustration of how the Teachers were struck by the contrast between the embodied soul and the free one. In simple, moving language he shows the two aspects of the soul. "His first advent in the flesh, which took place without honour by reason of His being set at naught, as Isaiah spake of Him aforetime saying, 'We saw him, and He had no form nor comeliness, but His form was despised and rejected above all men; a man smitten and familiar with bearing infirmity (for his face was turned away); He was despised and esteemed not.' But his second advent is announced as glorious, when He shall come from Heaven with the host of angels: as the prophet saith, 'Ye shall see the King in glory;' and 'I saw one like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven'". Hippolytus begins by drawing a picture of the soul as it is affected by the companionship of the flesh He describes how matter cripples it. In his unredeemed state man is virtually without form and comeliness He is despised and rejected. Smitten; suffering from infirmity. Without honour; without esteem. Afflicted in many ways. He is anything but a God. But when he shall come again! When he has thrown off the shackles of the body! When he is born

again as a free soul! What triumph! He comes in splendour, escorted by angels. "Ye shall see the King in glory". He is immortal. Omniscience is manifested in him. Men and angels bow down before him. Not to serve him; to take pattern after him. Now, indeed, he has become another "Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven."

From what has gone before it is permissible to draw the conclusion that the Christians taught that the body is fatal to the proper functioning of the soul. The question that we posed ourselves at the opening of the chapter is answered. It is the presence of the body that accounts for the difference between us as we are and as we should be by right of our divine nature.

This condemnation of the body on the part of the first Christians, combined with their belief that it acts as a prison to the soul, gives rise to a further question. How is it that the conflicting elements of spirit and matter have come to be united with the result that a living being—including man himself—is created; a creature with life and form? We will, for the present, confine ourselves to the consideration of man. The human body is an organism which is to be distinguished from a manufactured article. In an organism the power that organises resides in the centre as a nucleus. It builds the body about itself. In the case of a manufactured article a maker stands outside and constructs it. In short, the body is made from within; the manufactured article from without. From which we see that the organising power of an organism exists prior to the process of organisation. Unlike the power of a machine, which is the result of a combination of its parts. Since spirit is the living substance and immortal, while flesh is neither the one nor the other, it follows that the making of the body must be accredited to the soul. It should be understood, however, that it is not built up deliberately as a workman builds a house. It is the inadvertant result of certain of the soul's activities, of the vibrations of its will.

Since the body is the soul's worst enemy it becomes a paradox to say that spirit and matter are in union together because it is the soul's own work. Nevertheless the sad truth must be admitted. The material forces are

attracted to the soul by its own desire. Clement confirms this in his Homilies. For safety's sake he treats the subject allegorically and describes desires or cravings as 'demons'. Here is what he says: "For the demons having power by means of the food given to them, are admitted into your bodies by your own hands; and lying hid there for a long time, they become blended with your souls." Strange irony, when it is these very forces of matter which combine to prevent the soul from experiencing its own pure state of divinity.

In its embodied state the soul entertains strong desires for worldly things and the pleasures of the flesh. Therefore its body is built up as an instrument that will put it in contact with the world. For as we saw, it is only through the bodily senses that the soul is enabled to experience sensual gratification. Later on we shall examine in greater detail the effect of the combination of spirit and matter. We shall understand more readily then the serious repercussions of this body-forming activity on the part of the soul. We shall see how a gross material body is made, bringing with it its trail of trouble and tribulation with which we are only too familiar. How at the same time the body causes the soul to be thrown into a state of darkness, whereby it is unable to perceive its own nature. How this accounts for the almost universal ignorance of the spiritual laws, with the result in the worst cases that the soul actually denies its own existence.

For the present we shall be content to return to the further consideration of how the soul is affected by its thirst for sensual pleasures. We have already seen the body's adverse effect on some of the soul's powers; how the attributes of blissfulness and omniscience are impaired. When we study the Scriptures again we discover that the vitiation is a good deal more serious than might be suspected at first sight. In fact it seems that it deals a crushing blow to the actual realisation of the soul's Godhood. When we look into the Epistle to the Romans we find Paul teaching that if man lives for the pleasures of his body alone, he will die. "To be carnally minded," he says, "is to die." Not in the way in which the word 'death' is usually taken to mean. A man may continue to

live in the body. In the spirit he may die for lack of spiritual nourishment. The warning is sounded again when a few verses later he adds: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap also. For if ye live after the flesh; ye shall die." In the Epistle to Timothy his belief is again emphasised. "For she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Sensual gratification; spiritual death. Paul evidently held strong views on this subject for there are many other passages in his writings where his opinion regarding it is expressed in no uncertain terms. The belief of the Fathers is identical with Paul's, for according to Clement, "he who has not formed the wish to extirpate the passion of the soul kills himself."

We have uncovered the *raison d'etre* of the body and seen something of its effect on the soul. We shall now see how the body is actually formed, and show in greater detail exactly how the soul is affected by its presence. But before proceeding with this project it would be as well to learn first the real meaning of the terms 'freedom' and 'bondage.' The fact is that most men have failed to grasp their true significance. They look upon freedom from the political angle. They believe that so long as their persons are not seized or imprisoned they are free men. Even those few who are sceptical of the freedom of this 'free' state do not know why, though their persons may be at liberty they yet do not feel that they are as free as they might be. The feeling that Life is a web in which we have somehow become entangled is fairly widespread amongst those brave enough to think at all. They do not know why they feel bound. They do not know what it is that binds them. They might know that the Bible calls it 'the bondage of sin.' Even then, the expression conveys nothing to them for they do not know what constitutes this bondage.

In the Gospel of St. John we read that when the Jews were disputing with Christ concerning 'freedom' they were told; "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "What?" they shouted angrily; or words to that effect. "We are Abraham's children. We have never been in bondage. What mean you?" Christ, at once on his guard against their fierceness, observed ambiguously: "Whosoever committeth sin is the

servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Because they did not understand his metaphorical phrasing he was able to tell the Jews the truth without putting himself in the way of persecution. They were prevented from grasping the truth of Christ's words by their ignorance of spiritual bondage and its nature.

Sadly enough, just as the Jews failed to comprehend Christ's science of the soul so has humanity at large, right up to our times. Guided by the light of the fresh knowledge we have acquired, we may here interpret in plain and simple language the messianic observation. 'Whoso sins is the slave to sin, held in its bondage. There is no need to remain in the embrace of sin. This condition of Sonship of God, in non-allegorical language, of Godhood, once attained, endures for ever. If therefore you bring your Godhood into manifestation, you will attain to perfect freedom. Then indeed you will be free.' It will be spiritual freedom that we shall have won, more valuable by far than mere freedom of the body. We find Paul in his Epistle to the Romans imbued with Christ's teaching on this point, and agreeing with him wholeheartedly. He even employs the same metaphors. "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

Just as men have never properly assessed 'freedom' and 'bondage', so with 'sin'. Some few may know that it is 'sin' which enslaves. How it does so, and even its nature, they are unable to explain. If we desire to comprehend the full meaning of these terms it is necessary to know the nature of that which is capable of holding the soul in bondage. It is obvious that there is no concrete substance or thing that corresponds to the word 'sin' used as a noun. The word expresses an abstraction, that is a purely mental concept, and conveys the idea of wrong-doing. Thus the bondage of sin can be nothing else but the thraldom of actions. It is this thraldom of actions which prevents the soul from giving expression to its natural rhythm of freedom. It should be remembered that there can be no bondage to any mental

abstraction or any purely wordy concept. The term signifies some sort of fetters that are real. True, they are not weighted, visible chains. They are made of a subtle material, invisible to the eye. We must realise that nothing except force in some shape or form is capable of holding anything in subjection. Nor is it possible for any kind of force to be conceived of apart from some sort of substance or material. It appears therefore that the 'bondage of sin can be none other than the bondage of matter. This bondage of 'sin' that must be composed of some sort of matter is recognised by the Christian Fathers, as the writings of the ever-probing Clement serve to show. "Many truly, are the shoes of the sinful soul, by which it is bound and cramped. For each man is cramped by the chords of his own sins."

We have verified the fact that the presence of the body is definitely harmful to the soul; to the extent that it is held in bondage to it. We have also seen that this bondage is in reality the bondage of matter through action. We shall go on to examine more closely the evidence offered by the Christian Teachers that all action produces a material influx that to their idea is disastrous to the soul's welfare. Let me now define the law that governs the coming together of spirit and matter. All actions of embodied living beings by way of trafficking with the outside world are accompanied by an inflow of matter towards the soul. In the Syriac Documents this inflow is described as "a great impetuous stream, ever rushing on and bearing us along." It makes not the least difference whether actions are mental, physical or vocal. Every such action performed by any living organism is always in relation to some kind of matter or material bodies. Wherefore we have Christ teaching in St. Matthew's Gospel that "whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committeth adultery with her already in his heart."

What happens is that there is a continuous stream of material vibrations always pressing against the senses, whose business it is to transmit them to the soul. Whether a man touches, eats, smells, or hears, all he does is to extract a number of varying kinds of sensory stimuli or material; all of which he draws to himself. He can

shut himself up in the privacy of his own mind and refuse to pay any attention to the never-ending stream from the outside. Even then sensations that imply actual intercourse between the ego and the sensory centres of the brain continue. He may speak. He will hear his voice and be conscious of hearing it. He will be aware of the vibrations of his vocal chords as he articulates. In this instance, too, the influx of the raw material of sensations continues undiminished. There is no rest, no interruption from these intruders on the senses. It is possible, perhaps, for the eye to gain some sort of respite; it can be shut. In a similar manner the tongue may be given rest. But what to do about the ear, the nose, the skin? They keep open house, and all may enter in. Even the suspension of consciousness, as in sleep, is not sufficient to arrest the inflow. The desire for traffic with the external world is still there in the sub-conscious mind, though outwardly it may be quiescent.

I have purposely refrained from giving any passages from the Old Testament. Its Books are so hopelessly involved in a tangle of metaphor and allegory that any systematic quoting might have succeeded only in mystifying instead of clarifying. Here, however, is a passage from the 69th Psalm that expresses so well the idea of matter flooding the soul that I cannot refrain from giving it. The psalmist is imploring God to save him from floundering in the morass of the material influx. "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come unto deep waters, where the floods overflow me." It should be known that water is a symbol frequently employed for matter, as is pointed out in the Syriac Documents. "Matter is allegorically called water, the abyss."

Every action, then, is the gateway for a subtle kind of matter to enter in the form of stimuli; and they may unite immediately with the soul substance. This applies to every kind of action, and even when fresh matter does not come from outside there is always enough present in the sensory system itself for the soul to absorb. We see, then, that every bodily act is the prelude to an influx of matter through the senses.

Matter is also necessary to organise the means and channels of information and action for embodied living beings. It is a scientific truth that in a sensory-motor organism like the human body material parallelism is necessary throughout. The various physical and mental functions cannot otherwise be performed. The nervous system with its sensations and motions and its many ramifications would not be possible but for matter. Nor would there be attention; or succession of thought. As a matter of fact in a pure soul the process of thinking is replaced by the simultaneous appearance of the entirety of the innate knowledge; there is no more thinking, only feelings of awareness. Without matter, the intellect could not exist. It is also of interest to note while we are on the subject that all differences of human behaviour and disposition are due to the presence of matter. This was well-known to Clement for he says that "the individual man is stamped according to the impression produced in the soul by the objects of his choice. Again, without the intervention of matter we should all be exactly alike and the impulses that determine behaviour would be transformed into the knowledge that they really embody. There is, in short, no phase of human activity where either spirit or matter can be dispensed with.

Such is the extent of material parallelism in the human make-up that all feelings such as delight and depression are accompanied by mental modifications. Every state of feeling that we experience is due to the influence of matter. Matter is also involved in fresh readjustment every time one state of feeling is succeeded by another; when for instance a feeling of anger gives way to one of regret. This is because it is not possible for mental modifications to arise in our consciousness unless they are caused by a material agent. Which implies the presence and action of matter in some from or other. In dealing with the finite mind it is inconceivable to think of thoughts and words as such alone, as being apart from some material concomitant or basis. Sleep itself is an indication of the benumbing influence of matter on the mind. Vital bodily centres become affected by its secretions and characteristic states ensue

from the modified conditions. There is nothing in human or animal psychology to show that feelings, emotions, or states of consciousness in general, can be caused or modified without a cause; or that a cause can be purely immaterial.

There are certain aspects of mental attitude that demonstrate in a convincing manner the operation of this material influx and the resulting modification of the soul nature. The two opposite types of feelings known as delight and depression furnish strong evidence in favour of the occurrence of a material influx. In the case of mental depression the soul is literally weighed down by some material load. It means that its machinery of free-functioning becomes clogged, and therefore interrupted, by some sort of fine matter. It is the same in all depressed states of mind like excessive grief, pessimism, and so forth. What appears to happen is that certain feelings seem to weaken the intensity of the soul's natural rhythm. It becomes less buoyant and more exposed to the over-powering influence of matter. The soul attracts to itself large numbers of material particles, and as a sticky surface soon becomes coated with dust, in like manner the soul is pressed down by the matter it has drawn to itself, and loses its buoyancy. The very meaning of the word 'depression' serves to bear this out. It is derived from the Latin 'de' down, and 'pressum' to press. Thus we have depression as meaning literally 'a pressing down.' The feeling of delight, we may remember from an earlier definition, is a state of intense lightness. This state follows when for some reason or other some of the particles of matter that had flowed in in consequence of the slackening of the life-rhythm are mechanically dispersed.

Still greater credence can be given to the idea of a material influx into the soul when we realise that it is the natural consequence of the activity of attention in connection with the senses. The embodied soul comes into contact with the outside world only through the media of the senses; and it is characteristic of the senses that they fail to produce any impression on the mind unless they are linked to attention. Now who is it who feels the sensations of the sense organs? When a sweet is put

into the mouth is it the tongue that savours its sweetness? It cannot be, for there are times when a sweet is eaten and its flavour is missed altogether. This is because the attention is not fixed on it. But attention is only the soul in action in a particular way. Therefore it must be the soul that enjoys the food taken in. It seems from this that while most of the food passes from the mouth, through the gullet, and into the stomach, some finer particles of its relish reach the soul through the glands of taste and the connecting sensory nerves. A correspondding idea or sensation is then called forth.

Let me explain how feelings are experienced by the soul The influx from outside can penetrate still further into the soul. This is the stage when a feeling, pleasant or unpleasant, arises in the consciousness in connection with the object perceived. For example, when a peppermint is put in the mouth the first experience in connection with it is that of its taste. It becomes known that it is pungent. Nothing more. The estimation of its effect is still in the background. The perceiver has not yet realised whether it is pleasant or not. But when the stimulus has penetrated further in it produces a change in what is known to psychologists as the 'feeling-tone' of the organism A new state of feeling, pleasurable or painful, and affecting the soul, is evoked. The effect of the sweet is then known, and its flavour assessed.

The law that governs the bondage of matter can be deduced by observing the consequences of the material inflow. Observation shows that sensation does not always result from the influx of matter that is always impinging on the senses. I have already given some hints as to the function of attention but it is necessary to elucidate the point still further. Now if the mind is engaged elsewhere, that is, if the attention is focussed on something else, then food may be eaten without its flavour becoming known to the eater; and the same kind of thing can happen with the other senses. Without attention the ear is deaf to sound; the nose to smell; tactile sensitivity to contact; and so on. From these facts it appears that the mind has an inhibiting action on all the senses except the one that it may be attending to at any particular

moment. It follows that the particles of matter do not mingle with the soul substance unless they find an open door.

The same is the case with feelings of pain and pleasure and all the other bodily sensations. These also are not felt if the mind is engrossed in other things. This points unmistakably to some kind of material influx with every feeling or sensation. We may arrive at the same conclusion by studying certain mental states. The process of controlling passions like greed or anger indicates the concentration of all the will's outgoing energy, that is of the impulses embedded in it, which are material. Complete eradication of a passion can mean nothing less than absolute annihilation of its causes. That is, the mind is freed from the foreign material responsible for its existence and recrudescence. We may regard passions and emotions as so many kinds of the soul's rhythm, as states of consciousness, or in any other way. Nevertheless it is certain that a simple substance like the soul can never by itself be the basis of so many differing kinds of states or rhythms; some of which are without a doubt antagonistic to each other. Tranquillity, hatred and love, for example, cannot all be natural functions of the soul. If tranquillity is the normal state of consciousness, then the others are only forms of excitement and must owe their existence to some alien thing. Matter is the only other substance that intermingles with the soul. Matter, then, must shoulder the responsibility for abnormal passions and emotions. In summing up from all the evidence produced here I think we may agree that the bondage of sin is certainly none other than the bondage of matter, the result of action.

Thus we have progressed one step further in our examination of Christian Psychology. We have shown clearly that the early Christians attribute the woeful condition of human beings to the fact that they are held captive in the bonds of matter. We see from their teaching that they offer a way out for those souls eager to break the chains that prevent the manifestation of their divine state. To those who wish to realise their right

to live as Gods a way is pointed out. The way recommended in Christian teaching is the sealing-up of the channels that allow the material influx to seep into the substance of the soul. It is a three-fold one. They call it the path of Faith, Knowledge, and Conduct, and it shall provide the theme of the following! chapters.

CHAPTER VII.

We concluded the last chapter on a note of hope. The promise of a path leading to redemption of the divine state was held out to those in despair with earthly existence. The prospect of some time exchanging this life for one of immortality, where all the knowledge of the universe lies like an open book before the eyes, where supreme happiness and infinite power are realities, is indeed dazzling and offers new hope to the hopeless, always in danger of sinking in the slough of sensuality.

The first Christians were clearly masters of the Science of the soul; men wise in their knowledge of human psychology. They knew that it was not by haphazard unscientific efforts that man would ever be able to extricate himself from the tangles he has woven about himself. They knew that such a task was not to be lightly undertaken without proper training and careful guidance. They understood their subject too well not to know that there was a scientific way of bringing the soul to its own. Their minds were too well-cast in the iron mould of logic to rest until they had succeeded in discovering a Path of Freedom that led from the quagmire of embodied existence to the sweet, firm ground of salvation. It was a bigoted, ignorant humanity puffed up with its own dogmas and notions that forced them to cover up the tracks of their path with care and cunning, with the far-reaching result that to-day humanity still gropes in the dark for a way out of the chaos. I wonder. Does human nature ever change? Will it still spurn the Teachers' offering?

The Christians of old have bequeathed to us the fruits of their labour of love. A path which if we choose to tread it will lead us to freedom, the value of which they have even assessed for us, telling us at the same time that though priceless it is yet within our power to purchase it if we will It is Clement who asks us: "If eternal salvation was to be sold, for how much, O men, would you propose to purchase it? Were one to estimate the value of the whole of Pactolus, the fabulous river of of gold, he would not have reckoned up a price equivalent

to salvation." But though it is priceless, he hastens to assure us that it is within our power to purchase it. "Do not, however, faint. You may, if you choose, purchase salvation, though of inestimable value, with your own resources, love and living faith, which will be reckoned a suitable price."

It therefore only remains for us to trace out the path from the Christian writings. Christ gives us the first clue when in John's Gospel we find him teaching: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Here again he employs the metaphorical method to preach his doctrine. What he means by 'the way' is the path along which we must travel to reach the goal; hence we have right Faith or Belief. 'The truth' is knowledge, and therefore right Knowledge. 'The life' is the proper mode of living, and therefore right Conduct. Thus we have Faith; Knowledge; Conduct. A three-fold path to be trod by those who wish to come into their birthright of divine rank. According to Christian teaching, then, Faith, Knowledge and Conduct of the right kind are the three essentials for salvation. We shall take them one by one, examine them, enlarging upon them that we may see why all three are necessary, and understand the part that each plays in the struggle for freedom We will deal first with Faith, considered by the Teachers to be the first essential. In Clement's writings we find an estimation of the value of right Faith; how even exemplary conduct cannot help the soul if it is not based on right Faith. He says: "It is therefore of no advantage to them after the end of life, even if they do good works, now, if they have not FAITH".

Now faith is an attitude of the mind. It is an inclination towards a particular set of ideas. In psychological language it is a special mental complex. Faith is firm belief. It differs from simple leaning or inclination in that the element of uncertainty which is a characteristic of unbelief and present in leaning has been driven out from it. In plain terms, faith is free from mental agitation; inclination is not. Right faith, which is acquired by proper use of the intellect and has reason as its progenitor, arises from intellectual certainty and conviction.

It is impregnable against all attacks and cannot be destroyed. For intellectual discrimination is the only weapon capable of overpowering doubt, the arch-enemy of faith. Reason alone can withstand the shock-tactics of scepticism and the onslaughts of doubt. But in all other cases faith is liable to be assailed, and perhaps destroyed, by doubt. This can happen when something that cannot be reconciled with the matter of belief occurs to disturb and unsettle the conviction. If the doubt is not dealt with and settled in the natural way by study and investigation then faith may be blasted altogether. Unless the tendency to the contrary is too strong to be affected by it. In which case it will be smothered and faith reasserted by the will-ing side of the soul.

The important rule never to be lost sight of with regard to faith is that it never fails to translate itself into action. It is a law of nature that "as one thinks so one becomes." Christ knew the truth of this axiom for according to Matthew he teaches: "Be it according to thy faith." It is so because of the associations with which the ideal in the mind is placed; and also because of the unitary nature of life. Since desires are centred in the mental ideal they cannot but be modified and controlled by it. If a man looks only at his lower self, and always regards himself as a miserable sinner chained to his physical nature, then he must ever remain in that condition. On the other hand, if he pushes this aspect of his personality into the background and really believes himself to be a God, even though at present a God in bondage, then with that belief ever in his mind sooner or later he will break the chains that bar him from the complete realisation of his divine nature. Having unlimited faith in his belief that he is a God, he will never rest content until in very deed he is a God, freed from all restriction. Of such stuff is right faith made, and therein lies its importance.

Embodied life being what it is, right faith is extraordinarily difficult to come by. It is not for nothing that James cries: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" He knows that we are sensualists who violate the spirit within us every time we indulge in the pleasures of the world. Man is so taken up with his worldly affairs that

in most cases he never hears the 'still, small voice' of his spirit. He never comes near to recognising what is good for it. He never succeeds in finding out where he should place his faith, or what things are worthy of it. There are very few people who have any faith in the idea of the divine magnificence of their real nature. But then there are not many who have even the faintest idea of the truth that they are divine. How should they know? The ideals of the modern world hardly allow of this knowledge oozing through and becoming widespread; let alone that one's faith should be placed and ever kept there.

We may as well admit that truth is at a discount; neglected and despised. As things are to-day, we do not want truth. It might conflict with other aims. We have made truth timid, until it is chary of showing itself. In a civilisation like ours, where quick wits, a smooth tongue, slick clothes are the criteria of worth, truth does not dare to raise its voice for fear of ridicule and abuse. And as for faith in the truth! Our faith is invested in the money-bags that rule the roost, in self-indulgence that masquerades as culture. According to our faith the pen is no longer mightier than the sword; might is not only right; it usurps the very throne of truth, to receive with regal dignity men's homage. Who cares for truth? Who wants it? It hangs its head in shame and lurks in corners, far from the haunts of jeering, unbelieving men, almost gone from sight. In such circumstances we have no need to wonder that our sense of values has become so hopelessly distorted, that faith, which is so essential an element of human psychology and without which we cannot live, has been so basely misplaced. Is it surprising that wrapped in the suffocating cloak of so much confusion we have no inkling of the fact that we should be living as Gods? We know nothing of truth or how could we be content to wallow in the trough of sensuality, like swine who know of nothing better?

We find that the exponents of the Christian doctrine understand perfectly the difficulties that stand in the way of man acquiring the truth in which he may confidently place faith. They see that the physical self is so clamourous in its demands, so jealous of its 'rights', that the

spiritual self is easily lost sight cf. They know how its calls for succour, ever half-hearted because of the longings of the flesh, become fainter and fainter, until neglected and uncared for it sinks into slumber, where its longings for a free life are drowned in forgetfulness. The Teachers know that wrong thinking always produces this effect, with the result that it is more difficult than ever to attain to right faith. That when faith is misplaced then the only concern is with the welfare of the body, and that whoever or whatever is considered helpful to its interests is readily acclaimed patron.

The Teachers are very well aware of all this. They see that the first step to be taken towards the acquisition of right faith is that the soul must be roused from the state of lethargy into which it has allowed itself to sink. In other words, that we must be made conscious of ourselves—our real selves. The clarion call to bestir ourselves is sounded by St. Paul and is to be found in his Epistle to the Ephasians. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." We are commanded to wake the slumbering spirit and rouse ourselves from the stupor of spiritual death into which we have fallen. We must be made to realise that however badly we treat the spirit it never really dies, that though it may sink into a state of stupefaction through brutal and ignorant treatment, always it is only too glad to spring to life again, ready to assert itself at the first opportunity.

The Teachers tell us that this calling to life of the spirit is only the first step towards self-realisation. They recognise that their doctrine is a difficult one. Difficult to practice; difficult to attain, because of the deluding power of the physical lusts. It is Clement who bids us "arise, and understand your salvation." We are told that once we have become self-conscious we must go on to the understanding of our real nature. That having understood it in all its magnitude we may learn how to make it a reality.

Most people are too lazy to acquire truth by discrimination. They do not want to be put to the trouble of analysing the notions of that in which they invest the faith that is their spiritual capital. They are

quite content to choose the easy and comfortable path of believing in hearsay. They forget, or do not wish to remember, that although hearsay is able to lend some sort of satisfaction, it is incapable of covering all the possible points that can arise from it. Its value, reliability and interpretation must all be very carefully appraised before it becomes open to acceptance. It possesses, moreover, one great drawback that those who place reliance on it seem to forget. The removal of doubt does not come within its scope. It is for this reason that schisms and splits of opinion never fail to arise when people are content to rely on the word of the founder of their faith to the exclusion of all rational thought on their own part.

The satisfaction that such kind of testimony seems to afford is really more apparent than real. We can no more absorb knowledge by proxy and expect to derive benefit from it than we can hope to maintain our bodies by getting someone else to eat and digest our food for us. It is sound logic to assert that mere testimony is not capable of providing the solid foundation that we should demand as the basis of our faith.

Now that we have made ourselves aware of the dangers that lurk in the shoals of unreasoning belief we may turn once more to our study of the Scriptures. We see that the Teachers are anxious that we should not be deterred from our efforts to discover truth by any jeering that may come from those around us. We are not to be deflected from our purpose by mockery from him who cares nothing for the welfare of his own soul and does not like to see others showing any concern for theirs. Arnobius addresses himself to the mocking ones. "Do you dare to laugh at us because we think of the salvation of our souls?—that is, ourselves (care) for ourselves." He sees nothing odd or amusing in the fact that man should want to tend his soul and lead it to its salvation.

How difficult it is to understand the doctrine at first sight is well illustrated by the case of a willing pupil who was undergoing instruction from Clement. In the third volume of the A. N. C. L. the man apologises to his Teacher for his slowness in absorbing the doctrine. The reason he gives is as applicable now as it was then.

"Pardon me, my son," he says, "for I have not yet much practice in things: for indeed your discourses yesterday, by their truth, shut me up to agree with you; yet in my consciousness there are, as it were, some remains of fevers, which for a little hold me back from faith, as from health." Here is a real seeker, a man genuinely desirous of learning the truth. He is honest and does not mind saying that he is not used to thinking with scientific exactness. The doctrine, full of truth as he freely admits it to be gives him no other option than to agree that it must be the true one. But in his mind, as he says, there are still some remains of delusion due to past incoherent thinking. They persist in lingering, and serve for a while to hold him back from immediate acceptance of the true faith; just as complete good health is not fully restored until the last traces of fever have disappeared. Such a speech might as easily have issued from modern lips. The difficulties are so much the same.

But what is the precise and philosophical definition of right Faith? In Clement's writings we find a clear and concise description of it. He says: "Right Faith is ....a comprehensive knowledge of the essentials." This means that a faith in the essentials of right knowledge which is to lead to Salvation is true faith. For faith and knowledge are the basis of conduct. It is obvious that liberation cannot be attained without going about it in the proper way; that is, by right conduct. From what research we have already done, and without having to wait until the end of our labours to know for sure, we may be fairly certain that in living the life that will enable a man to break the very effective chains that keep him imprisoned in his body, unaccustomed strains will be thrust on him. We shall see as we progress in our study that the Teachers lay down strict injunctions, and prescribe methods of rigid severity, for freeing the enslaved soul. In the face of so much concentrated effort that this will entail the stoutness of a man's heart and his fortitude will be taxed to the utmost. If he has no firm deep-seated faith upon which he can draw for inspiration and courage then his efforts to free himself cannot be long sustained. His faith must be very firm. In fact it must be unshakable; invincible. And only a faith in the

essentials, as Clement puts it, can be this. It is only this kind of faith—right Faith—that will give sufficient strength to the aspirant after salvation to enable him to overcome all obstacles. It is the first requisite for realisation of the God within us. It is one thing to know the truth; quite another to realise it. When a man's heart is filled with belief in the truth he will set his feet firmly on the path of liberation and tread it fearlessly without looking back. This is the man who is "worthy of the kingdom of God," as Christ has it in Luke's Gospel.

Thus it is clear that the Teachers consider faith to be very necessary for the sustentation of conduct. Just as hope is necessary for eager effort carried out with unflagging energy. Undoubtedly they are right. A despondent or wavering disposition without hope, without faith, accomplishes nothing. Given right faith acquired in the scientific manner to what heights can a man not climb? But we must not anticipate. Suffice it here to say that faith is the first step to the accomplishment of anything. Without hope and faith we achieve nothing. If we place any value on the Christian interpretation of the Science of the Soul we must surely ask with Tertullian: "For by whom has truth ever been discovered without God? By whom has God ever been found without Christ? By whom has Christ ever been explored without the Holy Spirit? By whom has the Holy Spirit ever been attained without the mysterious gift of faith?"

The effect is that he who believes acquires "everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life." In St. Matthew's Gospel we find Christ likening faith to the mustard seed. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." The mustard seed is the smallest of its kind but it grows more vigorously than any other, producing a finer plant than could ever have been expected. In the same way the tiny seed of right faith leads to the kingdom of heaven.

Nor does Christ stand alone in teaching in this wise. The Fathers evidently arrived at the same conclusion for we find them teaching the same thing. It is Clement, who having defined right Faith, goes on to say that "the first saving change is that from heathenism to faith." Right Faith, then, is to be the first step on the path that leads from the black darkness of ignorance to the glory of a God.

Now that we understand something of the nature of right Faith we are ready to examine its effects on the individual who has attained it. Its acquisition must result in some psychological change. In the first place there is a general clarification of the intellect itself. He who adopts right Faith has undergone what we might call a mental 'tidying-up.' Something like the spring-cleaning of a cupboard when all unnecessary, superfluous rubbish is thrown out and dust and cobwebs brushed away. In the same way a sweeping clearance of all muddled thoughts and confused notions is effected before right Faith is acquired. All the bigotry, dogmatism and fanaticism that was probably cluttering up the intellect is got rid of. The seeker of truth then has at his hand all the advantages that are placed at the service of a genuine student of nature. A healthy, vigorous intellect; an open mind washed clean of prejudice and bias. With such advantages he develops naturally that scientific turn of mind without which we cannot hope to be successful in a study of nature and without which the truth cannot be received. Any grain of truth falling on such good ground is bound to be retained and will make so great an impression that its receiver will feel the strongest urge to know more. He will be led to seek out a teacher for further instruction, he will read all available books on the subject and study the Scriptures for enlightenment with all eagerness. In this way the conviction of the divinity of the soul is speedily acquired and its firmness is Faith itself.

Right Faith is itself the perfect antidote to depression and the inferiority complex. Speaking generally it may be said that our secret—or perhaps, sub-conscious—estimation of ourselves is that we are inferior creatures, stupid, born in evil, doomed to live in evil. The poison

of such autosuggestion does not fail to seep into the soul, undermining its natural buoyancy and self-reliance, making it impossible for man to control and shape his destiny as he wants, and as is his birthright. But once let him develop unwavering faith in the belief that he is a God, and nothing can prevent him from experiencing his own natural buoyancy. Faith such as this cannot fail to release something of the infinite energy of his soul. His innate self-reliance and confidence in his own power will assert themselves. What grander, more efficacious antidote is there to counteract the self-destroying suggestions that man so often gives himself?

Faith is the greatest force friendly to life. Surely and certainly it hacks away at the root of the powers of delusion and desire which are the two enemies-in-chief of the soul. In the language of the Bible the Faithful one on baptism into the right Faith is asked to "sit at the right hand of power till I make thine enemies thy footstool." As it was said before, the enemies are the internal forces residing in the individual will itself, not men outside in the world. Clement has something pertinent to say concerning the action of faith on desire, which as usual he calls by the allegorical term of 'demon'. At the same time he contrasts the varying effects on desire of unbelief, of wavering belief, and of strong belief. "But it is necessary in our prayers," he says, "to acknowledge that we have had recourse to God, and to bear witness, not to the apathy, but to the slowness of the demon. For all things are done to the believer, nothing to the unbeliever. Therefore the demons themselves, knowing the amount of faith of those of whom they take possession, measure their stay proportionately. Wherefore they stay permanently with the unbelieving, tarry for a while with the weak in faith, but with those who thoroughly believe, and do good, they cannot remain even for a moment. For the soul being turned by faith, as it were into the nature of water, quenches the demon as a spark of fire."

Thus I think we may certainly say that the benefit to be derived from an unshakable faith in right conceptions about life is truly great to the man lucky enough to have acquired it. Now that we have analysed right Faith we

can understand why the Teachers insist upon it as being necessary for salvation. It provides the very necessary support that a soul engaged in its efforts to free itself needs if it is to succeed. It encourages the aspirant after salvation, cheering and sustaining him. We must not, however attribute to it more power than it actually possesses. It would be a mistake to rely on right Faith alone to carry us to freedom. As Christ tells us the task of freeing the soul demands three requisites. Faith is only the first. As James the Apostle is careful to point out: "Even so faith if it has not works is dead, being alone." Right Conduct is the immediate cause of liberation but the business of right Faith is to give the vital spur and support.

CHAPTER VIII.

We are now brought to the discussion of right Knowledge, the second requisite that according to Christ is necessary for the soul's redemption. The preceding chapter opened with an analysis of Faith, which also included knowledge to a certain extent. There is, in fact, not a great deal more remaining to be said on the subject of knowledge since it is closely bound up with faith and of a necessity much of it was dealt with at the same time as faith. The difficulties that stand in the way of acquiring right knowledge are the same as those of faith and as we have just dealt with them in detail we need not dwell on them again. But we may well pause here and give heed to Clement's warning of the dangers of ignorance of right knowledge, that we may be spurred on in our efforts to overcome any difficulties that we may meet in our quest for it. He tells us "that ignorance of itself brings destruction." In another part of his writings he tries to bring home to us the deadly effect of 'sinning', as he calls it, whether in ignorance of its consequences or otherwise. "For if anyone should take a drug in ignorance," he asks, "does he not die? So naturally sins destroy the sinner, though he commit them in ignorance of what is right." If we take this warning with any seriousness then we cannot rest until we have acquainted ourselves with the principles of right knowledge.

When once the state of mind favourable to the reception of knowledge has been cultivated, the would-be possessor of right knowledge makes determined and concentrated efforts in his endeavour to learn it. As he did for right Faith, he enlists the support of all the available sources of information at his disposal—teachers, and their books; and the scriptures, which as we now understand must be studied with meticulous care. We are in fact enjoined by the Fathers to seek out a teacher. Clement tells us that "those who are diseased in soul require a pedagogue to cure their maladies; and then a teacher, to train and guide the soul to all requisite knowledge when it is made able to admit the revelation of the Word." "For while," he says, "the physician's art . . . . heals the

diseases of the body, wisdom frees the soul from passions." He then assures us that a 'beautiful' method has been worked out for the benefit of those eager to gain freedom that in the end will lead to the longed-for salvation. "Eagerly desiring, then, to perfect us by a graduation conducive to salvation, suited for efficacious discipline, a beautiful arrangement is observed by the all-benignant who first exhorts, then trains, and finally teaches." Ambrose, another of the Fathers, cannot help revealing in his writings how full of enthusiasm he is for the knowledge that is the basis of the true doctrine. Blithely he recites the blessings that it confers on its happy possessor. "Oh! the blessedness of the soul that is redeemed by the word! Oh! [the blessedness of] the teaching which quenches the fire of appetite! which, [though it] makes not poets, nor fits [men] to be philosophers, nor has [among its votaries] the orators of the crowd; yet instructs [men], and makes the dead not to die, and lift men from the earth [as] gods unto the region which is above the firmament." The Teacher exults in the knowledge of truth that is his, rejoices in his possession of it. Filled with its joy himself he extends to all mankind a jubilant invitation to partake of it. "Come, be instructed, and be like me: for I too was [once] as ye are" Thus he invites us in a sudden effervescence of joy in the truth. He longs, as must all knowers of the truth, for his fellow-beings to share it with him, and encourages them to partake of it by citing himself as an example.

Well, we will endeavour to be instructed and will do our best to discover the principles of right knowledge. While the pleas of the Fathers are still ringing in our ears we will hasten to do their bidding. They themselves, despite the handicaps under which they taught, are able to give us considerable help in the matter. A study of their writings gives us a definition of right knowledge that is excellent in its clarity and brevity. It is the infallible Clement who provides it. "Practical wisdom" he says, "is divine knowledge." He considers that knowledge to be right which contributes practical help to the freeing of the soul. From what we have learnt in the Scriptures it seems that he is right. If there is everlasting life as a God waiting for us to realise it, as the Christian

Teachers seem so sure there is, then surely that knowledge which helps us to reach that end is the only true doctrine of any worth? Is there any other form of knowledge that leads us to greater happiness than that of the freedom of immortality, with the unclouded joy and all the other divine attributes that come with immortality?

We saw in the last chapter that right faith means belief in the essentials of the science of Salvation that the Christians taught. Bearing in mind Clement's dictum that divine knowledge is practical wisdom it would seem that right knowledge means the adequate and proper knowledge of that science. Apparently, unless the student of that science adopts right faith, thereby removing any element of doubt concerning what he may have learnt of the truth, knowledge is not free from error, doubt or agnosticism, and cannot be termed right knowledge. It is the birth of right faith which sets the seal of belief on any information acquired. Only then is information entitled to call itself right knowledge. Until then it is not right knowledge to the hearer, but only to the teacher. Let us turn again to Clement for he demonstrates the soundness of this reasoning. Having observed: "Right Faith is ....comprehensive knowledge of the essentials," he defines right knowledge once more, more fully this time. "And knowledge," he writes, "is the strong and sure demonstration of what is received by faith, built upon faith........conveying the soul on to infallibility, science, and comprehension."

Confronted with this lucid definition we can only conclude that right knowledge means nothing more nor less than accurate knowledge of the science of Salvation. We have, then, to re-examine the information we have been able to extract from our study of Christian Psychology and to pick out from it those things that may be considered essential for salvation. On investigation it seems to me that the knowledge of the doctrine of salvation consists, according to Christian teaching, of seven points that may be deemed essentials for proper knowledge.

Starting from the beginning, as is only logical, the first point resolves itself into the nature of that which is to be freed, and whether it can be released. This, accord-

ing to early Christian thought, is termed soul. As we have been assured, it is a substance, endowed with life and consciousness. As such it is capable of being freed. The second point is concerned with the nature of that from whose clutches the soul is to be rescued. This, as we are told, is matter, and is also a substance, possessed of sensible properties such as colour and form, but without life or consciousness. The third point is concerned with the approach of the second substance to the first. This is the influx of matter into the soul. The fourth relates to the nature of the bonds and how they are forged. They are the resulting effects of the fusion of spirit and matter, and are always inimical to the soul's happiness. All corruption and defilement arises in this way as the Teachers have been careful to point out. The soul's own appetites and desires are the causes of the trouble. It becomes excited through their activity, the will is agitated by the excitement, matter comes pouring into the soul and the bonds are forged. The fifth point is concerned with the means to be employed to prevent the forging of fresh bonds. This is the arresting of the material influx, to be brought about by the control of desires. The sixth point relates to the destruction of the bonds already forged and in existence. This is to be accomplished by the casting out of desire, and by treading the path of Faith, Knowledge and Conduct into which we are now enquiring. The seventh point and the last, deals with the resulting state that arises from the destruction of bondage, and its nature. Thus our analysis of right knowledge brings us to Salvation when men shall live as Gods, enjoying all the divine attributes. These points, then, comprise seven essentials that make up the real Christian conception of right knowledge.

The whole Christian doctrine, embracing as it does these seven essentials, may be summed up in two short sentences. The soul (1) is held fast in the embrace of matter (2) which pours into it (3) and assumes the form of bonds (4). The arresting of the influx (5) and the destruction of all existing bonds (6) results in the liberation of the soul (7), than which there is nothing more conducive to its well-being. With Clement, I call these principles of right knowledge 'essentials' because as I see

it, no soul with any regard at all for its own welfare can afford to remain ignorant of them. They are the constituents of right Knowledge and the foundations for right Faith and the man who does not possess such knowledge knows nothing worth knowing, however well qualified he may be in worldly arts and sciences.

We may now understand the power of right knowledge and can see why the Teachers demand it as the second requisite for the soul's liberation. Now that we know its nature it is clear that without it man cannot be master of his fate. Only right knowledge can tell him to do the right thing at the right moment. It avails him nothing to rely on luck or chance to choose what he will or will not do; that is, to be without knowledge of what is the right thing and what not, when is the right moment and when not. Right knowledge is the map which furnishes an accurate survey of the path to be traversed, of the obstacles to be encountered on the way, of the precautions to be taken in steering clear of them. How can one expect to pilot one's self safely through unknown waters without a chart? How can the soul that has neglected to provide itself with right knowledge expect to reach freedom? Knowledge of the right kind is one of the conditions for the release of the soul. This, of course, is Christ's own teaching, implied in the sentence: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

"The truth." This is exactly what right Knowledge is. In St. John's Gospel Christ tells us: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Here the founder of Christianity tells men that they are his disciples only when they hear the knowledge of truth that he brings, believe in it and live accordingly to it. And the result will be freedom, he assured them. He tells us in the Gospel of St. Luke, he came "to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bound." His knowledge of the truth that he wanted to share with all would bring comfort to those who suffered from being involved in worldly life. He wanted to preach the doctrine of freedom, open the eyes

of those who were not Self-conscious, to free them from their bondage of the flesh of their own creation. It would in fact seem that only those who kept Christ's word could abide in his love, for in the Gospel of St. John he says: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love . . . . Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you . . . .He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

As we have seen, the Fathers are painstaking in their efforts to persuade us to turn our attention to truth. They take a serious view of the dangers of ignorance, and warn us of the Nemesis that we are assured will overtake us if we leave the world without having sought for and acquired right knowledge. So keen are they that we should strain every nerve in the effort to gain it that they actually warn us against the folly of hearing it and even then remaining in unbelief. "For if," says Clement, "after learning of these things, you remain in unbelief, the cause of your destruction will be imputed to yourself, and not to ignorance." He points out that it should be "our aim to discover what doing and in what manner of living we shall reap the knowledge of the sovereign God, and how, honouring the divinity, we may become authors of our own salvation." He goes on to say that salvation "is effected through both well-doing and knowledge, of both of which the Lord is the teacher."

It is also Clement's view that "the sole cause of our wanting and being deprived of . . . . things is ignorance." He goes on to explain why. "For while men do not know how much good there is in knowledge, they do not suffer the evil of ignorance to be removed from them; for they know not how great a difference is involved in the change of one of these things for the other. Wherefore I counsel every learner willingly to lend his ear to the word of God, and to hear with love of the truth what we say, that his mind, receiving the best seed, may bring forth joyful fruits by good deeds."

Added to the counsel of the Fathers is the weight of Christ's opinion. "These things I say that ye may be saved," he says in the Gospel of St. John. And according to St. Matthew: "Therefore whosoever heareth these

sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock . . . . And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand. . . ."

We come now to the value of right knowledge. We see from the Christian teaching that this lies in the fact that it illumines the darkness of ignorance through which we fall with so much ease into evil ways. It is as Clement says; "by illumination must darkness disappear. The darkness is ignorance, through which we fall into sin, purblind as to the truth." But the richest gift that right knowledge brings to its possessor, is that of eternal life, for it brings with it knowledge of how the freedom of the soul is to be attained. As Christ says, according to St Luke: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." For, as he also says: "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live."

It is this rare and priceless gift of right knowledge which makes the conquering soul of the Book of Revelation proclaim in triumph: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for ever more." It is natural that the light of the Wisdom Divine should be regarded as the harbinger of life since it brings to an end that lightless, Godless state described as spiritual death. The soul being pure intelligence by nature is affected by its beliefs. The moment it is filled and illumined with the knowledge of its divine nature it emerges from the condition of the dead to be born into the life of the Spirit, when in the fulness of time it is transformed into a full and perfect God. And as Clement says; "the end of knowledge is rest— the last thing conceived as the object of aspiration." Right knowledge brings eternal life; and eternal life brings rest, since it is the end of all struggle and strife. Incidentally we can understand from this the meaning of Christ's words as reported in St. Mark's Gospel. He speaks of God as being "not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him." He is God of those who through the acquisition of right knowledge have come spiritually alive.

But just as right Faith of itself cannot bring the aspirant after salvation to the desired end, so neither can right

Knowledge alone. As we have seen, Faith supplies the necessary drive and support. The contribution of Knowledge is the illumination of the path to be trod. Actual freedom of the soul is brought about by right Conduct. But right conduct is only possible when right knowledge, with right faith to support it, has been acquired by the seeker; as is recognised by Clement, when he writes: "For works follow knowledge, as the shadow the body." Only when the gift of proper knowledge is his will the seeker know how to direct his actions into the channel of right conduct. To quote Clement again: "Knowledge produces practice and practice habit or disposition." What is more, he goes so far as to declare that "all actions of the Gnostic may be called right action ......" while "that of the simple believer" is "intermediate action; but that of every heathen ..... are sinful." Of a surety it is as Clement says elsewhere in his writings that the man who has won right knowledge, "rejoicing in the riches of wisdom which he hath found, desires insatiably to enjoy them, and is delighted with the practice of good works; and hastening to attain, with a clean heart and a pure conscience, the world to come, when he shall be able to see God, the King of all." Thus we are shown by the Teachers that the value of right Knowledge lies in the fact that it brings with it the desire for right Conduct which is the immediate cause of salvation, as the next chapter will, I think, go to show.

But before we leave this analysis of right knowledge we must make some enquiry into a subject which is closely bound up with it and without which our study of it would not be complete. It is the doctrine of second Birth and Baptism. Nowadays baptism is looked upon only as a sacrament and all knowledge of its significance has been lost. Even by those people who received Christs's teaching firsthand its true import was missed. When he made a reference to it, saying according to St. John: "Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," the Jews, his listeners, were nonplussed. They asked how they were to be born again, and if they were to enter into the womb a second time. The reply was: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is

born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

The idea Christ wanted to convey is that of birth from darkness into light; from ignorance to knowledge. It signifies a spiritual birth; the birth in the Spirit, the first step of right Conduct, and without which salvation is impossible. When a man discovers the spirit within him, when he comes to know himself, he is regenerated; born again. The first birth of man is that of the flesh, into the world. The second birth is that of the soul, into the kingdom of the Spirit. Man is bidden to let Christ take birth in his heart. Then he will become a Christ, a God, himself. It is this birth of the soul into faith that is the basic principle of the doctrine of the second birth as propounded by Jesus and in which as usual he was misunderstood.

Now for the subject of Baptism. There are two kinds of baptism, as the Scriptures plainly show. St. Luke in his Gospel reports John the Baptist as telling his followers: "I indeed baptise you with water: but one mightier than I cometh the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." It was John's mission in life to prepare the world for the coming of the Christ who was to save them. John was to make ready for him, by cleansing man's mind and his beliefs; by cleansing his evil thoughts and washing away the impurities that might interfere with the reception of the right knowledge. But the Christ will purify with truth and fire, John says. His work will be to cleanse the heart of man with the fire of renunciation. The elements of greed and desire will be burnt from his heart and he will be led to the purity of the spirit. The baptism with fire is necessary, for only fire can burn up so much deep-rooted evil. Fire is the age-old symbol for the process of burning up, so that John's choice of it as a metaphor is obviously fitting. We see from John's teaching that according to the Christian conception of it baptism by water leads to a purification of thought, while baptism by fire leads to

a purification of the will. Both are necessary steps on the path of Self-realisation, and are for that reason insisted upon by the Teachers.

This interpretation of cleansing by water and fire is further endorsed by the Scriptures. In St. John's Gospel we have Christ saying: "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The mind is cleansed when knowledge of the truth is gained. The passion-consuming fire is known to the Fathers, who in their teaching distinguish it from ordinary fire. It is Tertullian who says: "The philosophers are familiar as well as we with the distinction between a common and a secret fire." It is left to Clement to describe this secret fire and its effects on desire. "For this," he says, "is righteous and necessary anger, by which every one is indignant with himself, and accuses himself for those things in which he has erred and done amiss; and by this indignation a certain fire is kindled in us, which, applied as it were to a barren field, consumes and burns up the roots of vile pleasure, and renders the soil of the heart more fertile for the good seed of the word of God."

The Scriptures attach great importance to baptism, and the necessity for it is insisted upon. We do not have to reason out for ourselves why baptism is considered necessary The Teachers explain it themselves, that we should not be left in doubt on the matter. Tertullian tells us why we should receive baptism. "For God alone is without sin;" he says, "and the only man without sin is Christ, since Christ is also God. Therefore when the soul embraces the faith, being renewed in its second birth by water and the power from above, then the veil of its former corruption being taken away, it beholds the light in all its brightness." A further reason for being baptised is given in the Syriac Documents. The writer says there that it is "a sign of the sanctifying of our invisible part, and of the straining off from the new and spiritual creation of the unclean spirits that have got mixed up with the soul."

Again in the Syriac Documents it is written: "And is not baptism itself, which is the sign of regeneration, an escape from matter, by the teaching of the Saviour, a

great impetuous stream, ever rushing on and bearing us along? The Lord accordingly, leading us out of disorder, illumines us by bringing us into light, which is shadowless and is material no longer." It goes without saying that the all-knowing Clement has his contribution to make in this connection. "And do not suppose" he says, "that you can have hope towards God, even if you cultivate all piety and all righteousness, but do not receive baptism. Yea rather, he will be worthy of greater punishment, who does good works not well; for merit accrues to men from good works but only if they be done as God commands." It is Clement who also cunningly anticipates the question that comes naturally to the tongue of the would-be initiate. He writes: "But perhaps someone will say, What does it contribute to piety to be baptised with water?" He has a reply ready." In the first place, because you do that which is pleasing to God; and in the second place, being born again to God of water, by reason of fear you change your first generation, which is of lust, and thus you are able to obtain salvation. But otherwise it is impossible." And he proffers the advice: "If, therefore, ye wish to be the vesture of Divine Spirit, hasten first to put off your base presumption, which is an unclean spirit and a foul garment. And this you cannot otherwise put off, than by being first baptised in good works."

The virtue of baptism is found in Clement's writings, in a quotation from the teaching of 'Peter', his instructor and master. "Peter made proclamation to the people, saying, 'Since I have resolved to stay three months with you, if any one desires it, let him be baptised; that, stripped of his former evils, he may for the future, in consequence of his own conduct, become heir of heavenly blessings, as a reward for his good actions. Whosoever will then, let him ...... attend to frequent fastings, and approve himself in all things, that at the end of these three months he may be baptised on the day of the festival.'"

From these Scriptural passages we thus perceive the connection between baptism and right knowledge, and may understand why the Teachers attach importance to it. We can well imagine the priest speaking to those

early Christians who received baptism, something in this wise: "Now you have accepted the hidden Divinity of Life. You believe that the Spiritual Ego that will emerge from it will be a manifest God, who will attain to his ideal through the help of the Spirit of Holiness that makes whole, by restoring the divine powers now lying crushed under the burden of matter. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, I baptise you and declare you to have attained to the second birth."

Baptism is the open acknowledgment of the adoption of right Faith. It is the formal, outward sign of birth into the fair realm of the spirit. It is an actual step forward and therein lies its value. The man who is not eager to receive baptism reveals, whether he knows it or not, that he is without real faith in the doctrine. He has not undergone the vital change of heart, he has not emerged from darkness into light, he has not acquired the soul force that pushes its way through the pall of ignorance.

The pure robe of Baptism once donned must be kept fair and spotless. The Fathers tell those who are received into the right Faith on baptism that they must take care not to soil the garment in which they are now wrapped. They are warned that "the ways in which this garment may be spotted are these: If any one withdraw from God..........receiving another teacher besides Christ, who alone is the faithful and true Prophet..... if anyone think otherwise than worthily of the substance of the Godhead, which excels all things:—these are the things which even fatally pollute the garment of baptism."

This, I think, completes our enquiry into the nature of right knowledge and we may now proceed to the examination of right Conduct.

CHAPTER IX.

We are now come to the examination of the third and last requisite demanded by the Teachers of him who seeks freedom for himself. Right conduct will now engage our attention for the space of several chapters. We already know that it is a necessity for salvation for we have been told by James that Faith, which implies also Knowledge, cannot of itself take us to freedom. He warns us against falling into any error on this score and bids: "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." In other words, faith is to be translated into action or conduct, if desired results are to be expected. St. James is right, for after all, proper action—right conduct—is the essence of all rational methods of attaining a desired end. No sane person expects inaction, or the doing of things in a confused, haphazard manner to produce any wished-for result. The principle that governs the realisation of the ideal is the same whether it be a spiritual one or any other. The successful achievement of any end in view depends on a combination of three things. First, belief, or faith, in the possibility of its attainment. Second, knowledge of the means that will place it within grasp. Third, the actual employment of those means in the proper way. Which means doing the right thing at the right time, and is thus right conduct.

The necessity for a coordination of these three things, faith, knowledge and conduct as a logical process for the successful culmination of an ambition is well-illustrated when we consider the analogy of an ocean-going steamer. Faith is the man at the helm who guides the vessel, keeping it to its course in fair weather and foul. Without him it would drift helplessly without ever reaching port. Knowledge is the chart that furnishes the man at the helm with details of the shortest and best course to be taken, the rocks and other dangers to be met with and steered clear of. Without the chart the boat would soon come to grief. Action, or conduct, is the steam-power that actually takes the steamer through the water. Take away that power, that action of the steam and it would never reach its destination. It would be

at the mercy of wind and tide, drifting helplessly, and the man at the helm with his chart would be useless, unable to do anything.

The truth of this is recognised by the Teachers. James is their spokesman when he asks: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto him, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give him not these things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." The Apostle puts the case perfectly. Who can deny that his logic is sound and irrefutable?

The scientific reason for the necessity of action is that before the soul can attain salvation the matter that it has accumulated to itself and woven into its very 'warp and woof' must be got rid of. This means that the flesh—that body of his on which man lavishes so much loving care administering to its every need like a blindly-doting parent—is to be cast off. Pay attention to what St. Paul writes in his letter to the Colossians. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Do we need more evidence that our interpretation of the Christian principle of salvation is correct? Unless it be from the pen of Clement, who writes that "the Saviour himself enjoins 'watch,' as much as to say, 'study how to live and endeavour to separate the soul from the body.'" Or again perhaps from St. Paul. When writing to the Romans he pleads: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Can the Teachers have put it more plainly that the body is to be discarded if the soul is to come into its inheritance?

No amount of faith and pious thinking from the comfortable depths of an easy-chair can remove the smallest sticky strip of matter clinging to the soul substance. As Lactantius has it: "Nor does the kingdom of Heaven belong to sleepers and sluggards." A task of this

magnitude calls for drastic treatment and strenuous action, as is recognised by Christ when in the Gospel of St. Matthew he says of the kingdom of Heaven that "the violent take it by force." Clement has quoted this text of Christ's and he commends the use of this kind of violence when he says: "For this alone is commendable violence, to force God, and take life from God by force." God will be only too happy to yield to such violence, he adds in encouragement. "And He, knowing those who persevere firmly, or rather violently, yields and grants. For God delights in being vanquished in such things." We can imagine that the action prescribed by the Teachers for Salvation would have to be forceful. For according to Christ's teaching in St. Luke's Gospel: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made smooth." All the twisting and mis-shaping, all the malformation that the soul has undergone from the hands of matter will be straightened out. All will be made smooth and beautiful and peace will reign. But only by force of the right kind, as Clement enjoins. "It is not simply doing well," he would have us note, "but doing actions with a certain aim, and acting according to reason, that the scripture exhibits as requisite." Thus he emphasises the necessity for conduct of the right kind.

We are brought then, face to face with the problem of how the fleshly body, firmly rooted in matter as it is, is to be thrown off. We have seen that matter pours ceaselessly into the soul through the senses. But the entire blame for this material influx cannot be imputed to them, since, as we may remember, the flavour of the peppermint in the mouth is not necessarily always tasted by the soul; it can remain there entirely unnoticed. This serves to show that matter by itself does not possess sufficient power to overcome the soul. The peppermint is not noticed unless attention is on the alert and cooperates with the sense of taste in its seducing work. This means then, that attention is the more culpable and consequently the more to be feared. This being so it certainly behoves us to make some enquiry into its nature and *modus operandi.*

We should note in the first place that attention apart from the soul is nothing tangible. It is only the

soul in action in a particular way. Attention is the will—which is the soul in the act of self-assertion—in a state of excitement; *at tension*. Hence attention. The activity of attention plays an important role in the life of the embodied soul and is, therefore, fraught with significance for us. Its function is to carry the stimulus from the outside object to the soul. If attention is elsewhere engaged then the stimulus will fail to rouse consciousness and perception and cognisance will not be had. As witness the failure of the peppermint's pungent taste always to penetrate to the soul. But let the flashlight of attention be turned on it and its taste is at once known. We already know that as soon as attention links itself with the senses the external stimulus is passed on into the courtyard of the soul; that perception in the perceptive centres then follows and that further inwards a modification of the feeling-tone takes place.

It is with the action of attention on this latter that we are here concerned, since it is the culminating point of attention's activity. It is here, on the feeling-tone of the soul, that the destructive work of attention can be noticed. For now matter becomes embedded into the soul substance, with the result that there is a modification and change of its disposition. Attention's work is then accomplished. This is how the fusion of spirit and matter takes place. Nor does it rest there, unfortunately for us. As soon as its end is achieved in one instance it immediately switches its activity over to another of the countless things that besiege it for an interview. The process begins all over again, and so it goes on, *ad infinitum*. Attention is a volatile jade; active and versatile, with a finger always in some pie or other. This untiring energy on the part of attention is a calamity for the soul, since it is thus subjected to ceaseless attack and bombardment from outside. Which nearly always results in the tightening of the bonds of the soul, and a compulsory association with matter is forced upon it. It is in this way that its bondage and misery is perpetuated.

But is attention always blameworthy? Is its activity always injurious? Could its infinite energy be diverted? Its customary channels blocked up and new

ones created? Could it not, for instance, be turned inwards, to the soul? Instead of outwards, to the body? We know that although matter may knock at the door of consciousness it does not gain admittance if attention is busy in other directions. When we study ourselves in the attitude of attention we observe that our senses do not work independently of attention. When the mind is linked with one particular sense-organ it ceases to work through the other media of sensation. Attention, therefore, imposes certain limits on the entry of matter. Now if attention were to be withdraw completely from the affairs of the outside world, what would happen? Matter would come seeking admittance but with no one to heed its knocking, that is with attention's entire energy concentrated on the soul, it would be forced to remain outside, unheard and unheeded. And no fusion between spirit and matter could take place; which is the objective in view. Here then, is where the vital necessity for right conduct comes in. In other words, right conduct consists in the turning away of attention from the objects of the senses to the soul itself.

But before we proceed to the investigation of the Scriptures to discover how this is to be done; before we see what rules of conduct the Teachers lay down for the accomplishment of this task, we must first settle one more point that is still outstanding. What is it that lies at the root of attention's traffic with the world? Why is it that attention finds it so difficult, so well-nigh impossible we might almost say, to turn inwards in the direction of the soul? There must be some source from which it derives its unflagging energy and interest in worldly things. Where is this spring that feeds it so bounteously; so generously?

When we peer more closely into the activity of attention we realise that it is also the instrument of conscious enquiry, or determination, and signifies interest. We attend only to those things that interest us, ignoring the thousand and one other things that lay claim to be known. If I am interested in a person it is because he excites me—the degree of excitement naturally depending on my interest in him. In the first instance the roving attention

is apparently quite casually drawn to an object. Attention is like a searchlight restlessly scanning the heavens until it alights on something that rouses its interest. At first sight only the bare outline of the object is noticed. If that is enough to stimulate further interest, then attention willingly fixes itself upon the object and if required continues to do so until it is known in all its detail. This is how cognisance is had.

It has just been said that attention signifies interest. But interest is nothing other than desire, since we are only interested in things that we long to acquire or enjoy; or in things that we wish to avoid. It is desire that stirs the mind and whips it into taking cognisance of the things that it does. Desire for contact with the world and the things it offers springs from love of the body. And alas, the body has so many wants that its possessor must needs seek to gratify. It demands to be kept well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed, protected from harm, and so on. It is not surprising that with so many appetites to be satisfied the will is kept ever in a state of excitement and that attention is always bustling around at its bidding. From this we may understand that what is meant by attention is simply the force of desire, which supplies attention with its untiring energy.

We have now reached the rock-bottom of the cause of the soul's trial and tribulation. When once we understand the nature and activity of desire in all clarity we shall be in the sure position of knowing how the soul is to be salvaged. Now that we know what attention is, and its function, we shall soon come to some understanding of the nature of desire. Like attention, desire is nothing apart from the soul. The soul moved by longing to possess a desired object, that is to say the soul agitated by a craving, is itself the actual form of desire. But desires themselves are so many different kinds of forces. They are capable of dragging the soul willy-nilly after their objects and they cannot, therefore, be altogether immaterial. The conception of a non-entity that can operate on the soul dragging it in certain directions thereby crippling its perception and narrowing its field of knowledge obviously contradicts itself. Desires are only so many mental impulses that differ from one another more in quality

than in respect of energy. The mental impulse set up by a longing for a drink must be different from that for food. In the same way a desire for milk cannot be the same as that for water. Desires, then, are only so many forms of mental agitation characteristic of the general ideas of different things.

We need then to see what a 'general idea' is. It seems to me that it cannot be anything else but an indivisible nucleus of sensation, whether visual or not. It cannot be a picture, for in that case it will become particularised; and not even a general idea of the visual kind can be allowed to become that. The general idea of the taste of an orange is not the same as the general idea of a particular orange. On the other hand, it is not a part or portion of a concrete idea or sensation. No sensation is capable of being broken into fragments. Neither is any sensation a mixture of more than one element or component parts. The fact is that the desire for an orange is a special form of the mental agitation that corresponds to, or harmonises with, the sensations appertaining to the orange species; and to nothing else.

We may now define a general idea with greater precision. From the point of view of substance, that is substantively, it is an aspect of the soul and is therefore indivisible. From the point of view of knowledge it is beyond the senses and cannot be analysed; it is felt by the finite mind, rather than known. As the moving force behind an active impulse it is the mental counterpart of a sensation; and owes its being to the combination of spirit and matter. Speaking generally, it is a sort of force marked with differentiating pitch and intensity and rhythm. But since it is an aspect of the intelligent substance of the soul it is not to be confused with the blind forces of nature.

Thus we may take it that desire, or impulse, is a general form of mental agitation. When it encounters an object that sends out corresponding vibrations it experiences what may be called a shock or thrill. This is the first step in the process of perception. At this stage cognition is felt rather than known. It is more like a feeling than an idea. But when at this stage attention

enters into play and ascertains the nature of the object by testing it with its inherent mental forms then proper cognition is had. We see then, that the impulses are mental re-agents. Through them in the first instance the finite mind acquires all knowledge of the outside world. They embody the general ideas of things, and by means of the correspondence between the mental and physical vibrations they detect the near presence of their objects.

Having analysed desire in so much detail we now have at our finger ends complete knowledge of the intimate working of the soul through its body of flesh. With our investigation of desire complete we are able to understand how it is that the soul is weakened by desire and how matter gets a foothold into its substance. The soul's entertainment of desire throws it into a condition of dependence on things other than itself. It then exists in a continual attitude of expectancy combined with uneasiness. Pure intelligence by nature, so that it is affected by its beliefs, any expectation of joy or comfort or assistance from outside itself at once impairs its natural strength and buoyancy. It is to this condition of expectancy that the soul's negativity, its receptivity in respect to matter, is due. This state of weakness on the part of the desire-laden soul is clearly recognised by the Teachers, as we learn from Tertullian. "For whatever is harassed by any kind of disturbance is, it is clear, capable of suffering, and frail; that which has been subjected to suffering and frailty must be mortal," he writes. As we have seen this harmful attitude is the natural consequence of the soul's desire for intercourse with, and traffic in, matter, from which it expects to get pleasure or joy in some shape or form. Which serves to display in all its naked shame the sorry spectacle of the soul's alarming ignorance of its own natural perfection.

As we have entered into so close an investigation of desire it will by no means come amiss here to include in it a study of passion. Passion, or powerful emotion, is capable of upsetting the equilibrium of the soul, agitating and disturbing it even more violently than desire. This is because passion is simply desire lashed into fury through active excitation. The basic roots from which springs passion in all its forms are four. They are greed,

anger, deceit, and pride. Greed is the active longing for a thing. Anger is the state of fury which flares up when the individual motivated by greed is thwarted in the acquisition or enjoyment of a desired object. Deceit is the cunning resorted to in the effort to secure an object of desire. Pride is the state of self-glorification and self-congratulation that results from the possession of the desired object or state.

There are four different degrees of intensity that passion may assume It can be mild, strong, overpowering, irresistible; which latter means simply uncontrollable. Naturally, the worst form of passion is of the irresistible type. The man who is under its influence stops at nothing to gain his objective. It is then that he will even kill. All forms of passion are bad because they interfere with the serenity of the mind and its intellectual working. This is so because passion is but a violent form of desire. We have seen that desire means mental craving or agitation. How much worse then, is the agitation set up by passion? We may turn to the Fathers for an answer. Arnobius says of it: "For wherever, ... there is any agitation, there of necessity passion must exist. Where passion is situated, it is reasonable that mental excitement follow. Where there is mental excitement, there grief and sorrow exist. Where grief and sorrow exist, there is already room for weakening and decay; and if these two harass them, extinction is at hand, viz., death, which ends all things, and takes away life from every sentient being." We may thus see clearly why desire is to be eliminated from the soul.

With our enquiry into attention and desire complete there is only one conclusion to which we can come. If the self-conscious soul is to reach that state of liberation to which it aspires, right conduct must be harnessed and brought into action to vanquish passion and desire. For only when this is accomplished can attention be withdrawn from the outer world to the inner. Our conclusion apparently coincides with the Teacher's own. In his first Epistle we find St. John teaching: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" The Fathers also urge us to cast out desire, the "alien" possession of the soul. It is Clement who exhorts: "Abandon the alien possessions that are in thy soul, that, becoming pure in heart, thou mayest see God; which is another way of saying, enter into the kingdom of heaven." It seems that when once attention is trained to turn its activity into concentration on the soul, into self-contemplation in other words, then gradually the soul will come to that state where nothing will be able to ruffle or mar its natural serenity and poise.

But attention can only turn inwards when it is left alone to do so; when it becomes interested in itself. There must be no eternal tugging at its apron-strings to distract it and otherwise engage its activity. This means that all desire for contact with the world and the pleasures thereof are to be given up and abandoned. This is the crux of the matter. For it is not possible for the soul to take the best of what both worlds offer. If a man longs to enter the life of the spirit that he may savour and partake of its joy and freedom, he must be prepared to give up completely the life of the flesh and all its claims upon him. He cannot stand with one foot planted in both worlds, as it were. He cannot be both in the outer world and not of it. The object of him who would liberate himself must be to rid his soul of its body and from our own reasoning we see that this is to be done only by giving up the world. All desire for bodily life is to be rooted out, and the pleasures that it proffers are to be abjured. The Path of the Christian teaching consists, in reality, in desirelessness. For to be rid of desire is to be rid of excitement; to be rid of excitement is to be rid of matter. To be rid of matter is to be free; the goal is reached and the aspirant comes into his own. It is on this aim, on this eradication of desire, that the energy of conduct is to be concentrated.

But let us return to the Scriptures, that we may draw upon the opinion of the Teachers in regard to this conclusion that we have drawn. We immediately find

the Fathers pointing out the danger and foolhardiness of running after physical pleasure. They look upon pleasure as a treacherous master ever deceiving those who worship it, holding them in thraldom to itself, luring them on to destruction. In emphasis of their loathing for it they choose the serpent as a symbol when writing of it. It is Clement who informs us that "the serpent allegorically signifies pleasure crawling on its belly, earthly wickedness nourished for fuel to the flames." Strong language, but evidently he feels very strongly about it.

In the Apocryphal Gospels etc. of the A. N. C. L. the writer there asks men why they enslave themselves to so foul a creature. "My brethren..... why have you been taken captive by your enemy the serpent, twisted, crooked and perverse, to whom God has given neither hands nor feet? And crooked in his going, since he is the son of the wicked one; for his father is death, and his mother corruption, and ruin is in his body. Do not go in then into his destruction; for you are in bondage by the unbelief and deception of his son, who is without order, and has no substance; formless, and has no form in the whole creation, either in the heaven or in the earth, or among the fishes that are in the waters. But if you see him, flee from him, since he has no resemblance to men: his dwelling is the abyss, and he walks in darkness. Flee, then, from him that his venom may not be poured out upon you: if his venom be poured out upon your body, you walk in his wickedness." We are exhorted to pluck out from our hearts desire, the evil seed that the lust for pleasure has planted there, and the cause of all our troubles. For desire is pleasure's progeny. "Flee from Satan the dragon, and remove from you his wicked seed, namely, desire, by which he gets disease in the soul, which is the venom of the serpent. For desire is of the serpent from the beginning, and she it is who arms herself against the faithful; for she came forth out of the darkness, and returns to the darkness You ought therefore, after coming to us, or rather through us to God, to throw out the venom of the devil from your bodies."

Tertullian paints a graphic picture, as a warning to men, of the agitation and disturbance that the desire for

worldly pleasure can set up in the soul. He begins: "I think, then, that under the general designation of lust, pleasures are included." He takes one particular form of pleasure as an illustration and proceeds to demonstrate the havoc it can work. "In like manner, under the general idea of pleasure, you have as a specific class 'shows'........ .For the show always leads to spiritual agitation, wherever there is pleasure, there is keenness of feeling, there is rivalry, you have rage, and bitterness, and wrath, and grief, and all bad things which flow from them—the whole entirely out of keeping with the religion of Christ. For even suppose one should enjoy the shows in a moderate way, as befits his rank or age or nature, still he is not undisturbed in mind without some unuttered movings of the inner man. No one partakes of pleasures such as these without their strong excitements; no one comes under their excitements without their natural lapses." As he continues he shows how the love of pleasure leads to strong desires and passions. "These lapses, again, create passionate desire." His next words serve to prove that if we entertain no desire for pleasure in the first place, then we have a double gain. For we escape from both the agitation characteristic of longing and from that of gratification, which is also agitation. From which we understand that gratification of desire is also an affliction, even though a pleasurable one, because the real happiness of the soul is of another type Tertuallian says that "if there is no desire, there is no pleasure, and he is chargeable with trifling who goes there where nothing is gotten." He then draws the conclusion that since excitation of the soul either by like or dislike is forbidden for its own good, then we should refrain from seeking pleasure in the world. "Since, then, all passionate excitement is forbidden us, we are debarred from every kind of spectacle, and especially from the circus, where such excitement presides as in its proper element.... Whatever they [the partakers or spectators] desire on the one hand, or detest on the other, is entirely foreign to themselves." We see from this with what vehemence the Fathers lay accent on the necessity of freeing the soul from the enticement of worldly pleasures and that when once the desire for pleasure is overcome the battle is as good as won.

The Teachers have plenty more to say concerning the eradication of desire, and passion with it, and we are sure to profit from a closer examination of their teaching. They remind us first that Gods are free from passion and desire. "But God is impassible," says Clement, "free of anger, destitute of desire." He is passionless, desireless. He is 'impassible', that is matter can never become mixed with the substance of his soul, because He is ever tranquil, dispassionate, without agitation or disturbance. Then Tertullian points out the evil effect of passionate emotion on those who cherish it. "....anger harasses and destroys those who are subject to it: therefore that should be called mortal which has been made subject to the emotions of anger." And as with anger so with the other passions. Which leads Clement to exclaim: "We must therefore rescue the Gnostic and perfect man from all passions of the soul." Knowledge is of very great help towards this end. "For Knowledge," Clement goes on to say, "produces practice and practice habit or disposition." The result will be a state of utter dispassion; eradication, not mere quiescence. "And such a state as this produces impassibility, not moderation of passion. And the complete eradication of desire reaps as its fruits impassibility." He adds that the Gnostic, he who knows better, takes no delight in the things that are akin to passion. On the contrary, he seeks to avoid their temptations. Again therefore, it is easier for him to bring his passions under control. "But the Gnostic does not share..... in those affections that are commonly celebrated as good, that is the good things of the affection that are alike to the passions."

Thus we find that the conclusion reached by us fully agrees with the Christian teaching, and the Teachers leave us in no doubt as to what our aim should be. Desire is a demon to be destroyed. As Clement aptly puts it: "The labour, therefore of every one is to be solicitous about the putting to flight of his own demon. For, being mixed up with men's souls, they suggest to every one's mind desires after what things they please, in order that he may neglect his salvation." Clement does his best to help the seeker on his way by formulating the laws that

govern the activity of desire. "And this is the bound assigned," he writes, "that unless one first do the will of the demons, the demons have no power over him." The Christian conception is that we are slaves only so long as we continue to obey its commands. Once scorn it, and its power is broken.

Clement says, furthermore, that desire cannot rule us unless we court it, treating it as friend and companion. "But you ought to know that the demons have no power over any one, unless first he be their table companion." Not even the most turbulent rabid desire can counter the inflexible barrier that we can, if we choose, set up against its attack. "Since not even their chief can do any thing contrary to the law imposed upon him by God, wherefore he has no power over any one who does not worship him." And why should we not make the attempt to control desire, since desire alone cannot give us what we want? I can long to be king as much as I like, but it is most unlikely that I ever will be. The gratification of such a desire depends on circumstances quite outside me. As Clement says: "But neither can any one receive from them any of the things that he wishes, nor in anything be hurt by them."

Clement enters into this subject of desire very thoroughly and has more advice to give us. He warns us against nurturing it in our hearts by continually dwelling upon it. "For our mind," he says, "whenever it is impressed delightfully with the image of a beloved one, always seeing the form as in a mirror, is tormented by the recollection; and if it do not obtain its desire, it contrives ways of obtaining it." But gratification is also bad for us, according to him, for then fuel is added to the flames, and the fire of desire is increased a thousandfold. Especially, he adds, where there is no fear of the consequences of continually gratifying passion. "But if it do obtain it, it is rather increased, like fire having a supply of wood, and especially when there is no fear impressed upon the soul of the lover before the rise of passion. For as water extinguishes fire, so fear is the extinguisher of unreasonable desire."

Thus are we counselled to rid ourselves of desire. This is the task of right conduct. This is the motive that

distinguishes right conduct from the ordinary behaviour of men who act from worldly motives. We are not to judge its merit from visible action alone. It is the motive which is the distinguishing and operative factor. Clement has it that "it is not the outward act which others have done, but something else indicated by it, greater, more godlike, more perfect, the stripping off of the passions from the soul itself and from the disposition, and the cutting up by the roots and casting out of what is alien to the mind." To illustrate what Clement means, let us suppose that there are two people in the same house who are refraining from food for a certain period. The motive, and therefore the result, of each may be very different. One may be 'slimming,' the other 'fasting.' Outwardly the act is the same, but there is a subtle difference. Whereas the first is stripping his body of superfluous fat, the second, the Gnostic, is stripping his soul of passion and desire. It is as Clement concludes. "For this is the lesson peculiar to the believer, and the instruction worthy of the Saviour."

Clement goes still further and asserts that the conquest of passion is the only real contest that life offers; the only one worthy of hard effort. He declares that "the true athlete" is "he who in the great stadium, the fair world, is crowned for true victory over all the passions.. ..... Angels and Gods are spectators; and the contest, embracing all the varied powers of inordinate passions that work through the flesh. He who obtains the mastery in these struggles and overthrows the tempter......wins immortality." He who is victor, the true victor because he has triumphed over his only real enemy, is "the one who has obeyed the directions of the trainer." He who had followed the direction of the teacher well versed in the rules of life. It is he who "wins the day," as Clement puts it.

He who has mastered the passion of his soul is, according Clement "the good man ..... without passion, having through the habit or disposition of his soul endued with virtue transcended the whole life of passion." Moreover, he now has the direction of his liberation absolutely in his own hands, under his own control. "He has

every thing dependent on himself for the attainment of the end." "For salvation," says Clement, "is the privilege of pure and passionless souls."

Thus far we have seen that the way to salvation lies in getting rid of the body, and that this is to be done by casting out all desire for sensual contact with the world. We have now to examine the Scriptures further with an eye to bringing to light any method that the first Christians may have devised for combating desire in such a way that eventually it can be entirely cast out. Careful investigation will, I think, lead us to see that there is a way prescribed by the Teachers and that it is none other than strict discipline of the body and its appetites. Only in this way, according to their teaching, can a curbing rein be put on desire and its activity checked. As we become accustomed to bodily discipline more and more pressure is to be exerted until finally the ugly weed is uprooted from the heart in all its entirety. The Teachers are most emphatic on the necessity for drastic measures to counter the lusty demands of the body. The reason for their belief is given by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to another: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

It is the unhappy juxtaposition of the body that according to Paul leads to the internal war with which, like him, we are only too familiar. St. Paul laments man's inability to do what he should and refrain from what he should not. "For the good that I would I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." The unceasing conflict is occasioned by the eternal antagonism that exists between soul and body, the valuations of good and evil. Clearly does St. Paul perceive how the blind longings of his embodied soul for the things of the world weaken his native vigour, causing him to be bound hand and foot by the chords of sin, that

is desire. As he perceives, his free nature—his soul—is constantly at war with his evil inclinations and pursuits. Thus it is with all embodied souls. There is a constant battle ever raging in the field of action—the physical body—in which the body is usually victor. Wherefore Paul's exhortation to men to spurn as he does the flesh and the wiles with which it seeks to entangle the soul. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means. ......I myself should be a castaway." He bids us cultivate the soul. "For he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Thus he writes in his Epistle to the Galatians.

It will prove of some interest if we follow up these quotations from Paul's Epistles by giving some consideration to a quite delightful passage from Clement's writings. It serves to show the 'working connection' between the body and desire. "But the reason why the demons delight in entering men's bodies is this. Being spirits, and having desires after meats and drinks, and sexual pleasures, but not being able to partake of these by reason of their being spirit, and wanting organs fitted for their enjoyment they enter into the bodies of men in order that, getting organs to minister to them, they may obtain the things that they wish, whether it be meat, by means of men's teeth, or sexual pleasure, by means of men's members." Clement then declares that the best weapon with which to fight desires is to submit the body to stern discipline; asceticism in short, and he explains why. "Hence, in order to the putting of demons to flight, the most useful help is abstinence, and fasting and suffering of affliction. For if they enter into men's bodies for the sake of sharing (pleasure), it is manifest that they are put to flight by suffering." After studying this quaintly worded but masterly summing up of the situation, it would seem that St. Paul is justified when he says, in the Epistle to the Romans that "if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." And when in the Epistle to the Colossians he says; "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." St. Peter too seems to have understood clearly enough the nature of the injuries that the body does the soul, and to have grasped

the effect that mortification of the body would have upon it when he says in his first Epistle, "for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."

Tertullian goes farther than merely advising us to mortify the flesh. He declares that "the sole key to unlock Paradise is your own life's blood." To his way of thinking the body is to be completely abandoned; even to the handing over of it to death Neither is he alone in holding this belief that nothing short of the death of the body will suffice to free the soul. St. Paul entertains the same idea, as we can see from his first Epistle to the Corinthians. He states that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." As man is he fears the death that must inevitably overtake his body, but once engaged in the life and death struggle for the freedom of his soul he no longer looks upon it as an enemy to be dreaded. All terror of it disappears when he comes to realise that the conquest of the body in death is the beginning of the real life of the soul. And we shall see soon that Christ held the same belief. As St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Romans: "For he that is dead is freed from sin." It seems that this must be true for when the flesh is conquered, when it dies for the last time, then indeed is death, the enemy, destroyed. Which accounts for Christ's saying in St. Luke's Gospel: "Neither can they die any more." With the destruction of the body the soul comes into its own; and since it is a simple substance death does not exist for it.

It seems from all this that the body must go 'the way of all flesh' if the soul is to be saved. How then, are we to begin this process of disintegration, this breaking down of the flesh, who are already so steeped in sin? Again the thorough-going Clement has anticipated our question. He writes: "But some one will say, And what shall we do now, to whom it has already happened to be smeared with sins as with pitch?" His answer is that we must cleanse ourselves in the pure waters of the true faith, and cultivate our knowledge of it to the greatest possible extent. Then henceforward we will bridle our lusts, because being possessed of knowledge of the dire evil that comes from gratifying them, we shall fear to gratify desire lightly and thoughtlessly. In his own

words: "I answer: Nothing; but hasten to be washed, that the fuel of fire may be cleansed out of you by the invocation of the holy name, and that for the future you may bridle your lusts by the fear of judgment to come, and with all constancy beat back the hostile powers whenever they approach your senses." "For every cause of sin," as he explains elsewhere, "seems to be like tow smeared with pitch, which immediately breaks into flame as soon as it receives the heat of fire . . . . If therefore any one be found smeared with sins and lusts as with pitch, the fire easily gets the mastery of him. But if the tow be not steeped in the pitch of sin, but in the water of purification and regeneration, the fire shall not be able to be kindled in it." The next passage that we take from his writings assures us that the reward of controlling desire will be truly great and well worth the sacrifice of the bodily self. "But self-control . . . . perfected through knowledge abiding ever, makes a man Lord and Master of himself; so that the Gnostic is temperate, and passionless, incapable of being dissolved by pleasures and pains, as they say adamant is by fire."

It is interesting to note here in connection with this question of the soul's subjection to the flesh that the Teachers use the cross as a symbol for complete detachment from the body. Or rather of the mortification not of the physical body but of the lusts of the flesh—desires and appetites. It is Clement who gives us the key to their use of it as a symbol that we may understand it properly. He says: "If you wish to be the Lord's disciple it is necessary you 'take your cross and follow the Lord,' [your cross] . . . . . your body only, which is after the manner of a cross." The body is the cross on which the soul is crucified. If a man really believes in Christ he will gather up his body, shoulder the burden of it as it were, and follow Christ's teaching. Do this and according to Clement, "bound to the wood of the cross, thou shalt be freed from destruction." Burdened with the body as man is, if he follows the way lit up by the Leader, he will be freed from it.

Christ himself says the same thing, according to St. Matthew. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whoso-

ever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Here we have Christ's own belief stated as plainly as he dared in that barbaric period of religious persecution. Now that we have been able to interpret his teaching in the way he meant it to be, we may do what he was not permitted to do—put it into plain unequivocal language 'If any man will follow my teaching let him deny himself the pleasures of the body, bear the burden of the flesh and travel the path I have pointed out. For he that would preserve his bodily life shall lose everlasting life: and he who will lose willingly the bodily life will find life eternal.'

We gather from their writings the fact that the Apostles and Fathers follow Christ's lead on this point and are unanimous in teaching the same principle. In the New Testament, in his letter to the Galatians we have St. Paul saying: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" And among the Fathers Tertullian is to be found teaching: "And to bear the sign of the cross is to bear about death, by taking farewell of all things whilst still in the flesh alive." He thinks that to adopt the sign of the cross, that is to become detached from all the allurements of the body, means that we bid the world adieu even while we are still living in the body. Then later on when the farewell of the world is actually accomplished, death itself can be bid adieu.

With this we have concluded the theoretical side of right conduct and we can now turn to the practical side, to see how these Christian conceptions work out in practice. Some people may think that they are being asked too much when required to give up the near at hand pleasures of worldly life. But let us look at the picture of the consequences of a life of the world on the one hand and a life of religious discipline on the other. On the side of the worldly life a man may, if he is lucky, have a few of the good things of life come his way; if he is a spoilt favourite of fortune even name, fame, rank, wealth, and luxury. But the end! What sort of a picture is that which is presented before our frightened eyes? A body worn out and delapidated from the pursuit of pleasure; a wrinkled skin; disordered, impaired digestion; toothless jaws;

dimmed eyesight; a bald pate; perhaps poverty, disease, helplessness; friendlessness; certainly death, with only a last despairing hope that it may be an easy one. In the life of the world—a few years pleasure-seeking, then the slow, inevitable deterioration and disintegration.

And the life that is devoted to religion? Here, the difficulties come first—study and investigation; a life of discipline of ever-growing severity, culminating in the denial of all the good things of the world and the curbing down of lusts. But what lies at the end? It is not death—it is not a rotting carcase in a mouldering grave. It is a triumphant and glorious end—immortality; infinite knowledge and bliss; eternal youth; everlasting freedom from fear, anxiety, disease, and the appetites, lusts, cravings and passions of the flesh. On the one hand a few scattered pleasures, and a future horrible to contemplate. On the other, some years of hardship and discipline, and then life, and joy, and light, for ever and evermore. But let us turn to the practical side, to see how these Christian conceptions work out in practice.

CHAPTER X.

We are now thoroughly equipped for an enquiry into right Conduct as it is to be carried out in practice. The first thing to realise is that floundering in the sea of desire as the ordinary man does he cannot suddenly turn round and swim out of it merely by wanting to. He will first have to do battle against the treacherous currents that would hold him back, and this calls for strenuous effort over a long period. It is only the most advanced and highly trained men who can swim out of the sea of desire, let alone dry it up. These are the men who are undoubtedly the true saints, the true ascetics; such noble minds they have, so highly developed is their control of the body and its desires, so full of eager anxiety are they to press along the way to freedom. They are the pure souls determined to reach the goal by the shortest route, the way of asceticism.

But saints such as these do not drop casually from the skies. They are surely the men whose feet have long been planted firmly on the path of renunciation. They must have trained and disciplined themselves for over a long period, since salvation is for them a reality within practical reach. They must at one time have been ordinary laymen and it is in this fact that I see the ray of hope for the new apprentice to that most arduous of trades, true Religion. The saints must have risen from the ranks of the laity, with whatever pain and labour it cost them. But they did it, for there is no other way. And what one soul can do any other can. It is clear that the layman, the ordinary enlightened man of the world who nevertheless looks forward to liberation at some time in the future, cannot hope to attain his objective straight away without undergoing any initial training at all. He is the more easy-going kind of man, content to know that some day, some time for which he is in no immediate hurry, he will free himself. He will be content with a slower, more easily-graded progress. He will not mind the slowness, as long as he makes some progress and gets a little nearer the end in view. At all events, the layman with his unpreparedness and lack of training cannot hope to keep pace with his more advanced brethren. Perhaps, then,

there is a lesser path for him; a path that though easier and therefore longer, will lead him nonetheless to the desired end?

Judging from the facts that we have garnered it seems to me that the path of right Conduct must of a necessity be bifurcated. There is surely one path for the saints, and another less stony, less austere, for the novitiate. One preliminary, one advanced. The preliminary to lead to sainthood; the advanced direct to Godhood and Immortality. The layman to traverse the first; the saint the second. The principle in operation along the two paths must, of course, be the same—the detachment of attention from the physical body and its cravings and appetites. But whereas the path along which the saint travels enables him at the last to eradicate these desires entirely, the layman treading his easier path will only go so far as to allay them; to bring them more and more under his control. This seems quite practical to me, for when he has succeeded in mastering them to that extent he will then have fitted himself to step on to the advanced path. It is in this way that his easier route can in the end lead him to the same desired goal.

It seems then, that a secondary, easier path is obviously indicated. Such a path is indeed a necessity, to provide the training-ground for the course proper. Here the novice may undergo his preliminary discipline. We shall see that many of the rules laid down by the Christian Teachers for salvation are of a certainty meant only for the guidance of the highly-developed class of man, so characterised are they by the utmost severity of disciplinary austerity. They are rules which no one desirous of attaining Godhood and freedom can afford to ignore, but surely none but the saint can carry them out. There are also however, injunctions bearing on the same subjects but tempered down so that they are less strict. I cannot think that it is inferring too much to believe that these are for the guidance of the beginners, the laity whose souls are less matured. When we come to examine these rules, which as I believe are divided into two sets, we shall find that some rules of conduct laid down as befitting

some—clearly the novice, are forbidden others—equally clearly the saint. This is a certain indication of the existence of two paths.

The bisection of the path into two divisions is quite compatible with the steady progress of the soul through its successive incarnations. This latter, by the way, is a subject that we have yet to touch upon and investigate from the Christian standpoint. But for the moment we must keep to the matter in hand. It is certain that rules of conduct, if they are to raise the status of a man, must be consistent with the laws of progress so that they bring out the best within him. From their injunctions it seems that this point is carefully kept in mind by the Teachers, practical as ever, and that the rigidity of moral discipline is in the case of less evolved souls made to yield only to that extent to which it is compatible with the idea of steady, even if slow, progress on the upward path. The golden mean that the Teachers seem to have kept in mind when framing their rules might be summed up 'avoid both shirking and overstrain.' Obviously it is for this reason that while, as we shall see, the Teachers impose strict celibacy on the saint, the layman is allowed, indeed advised, to marry and is required only to restrict his sexual passion to his wife.

I have said that 'it seems' that there are two paths of right Conduct along which the aspirant for salvation may tread. This is because I can find no statement in the Christian Scriptures we are studying which says definitely that the path of freedom is bifurcated. I attribute this to the usual reason that no detailed definite instructions on the subject could be given because of the fierce opposition that they would have aroused in the intolerant masses. As Christ himself asks in the Gospel of St. John: "If I have told you earthly things; and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" But when we come to examine the injunctions laid down by the different Teachers at different times I think it will be agreed that there are two different sets of rules. And that they are two sets which differ only in their severity; one, surely, for the novice, the other for the saint, the advanced soul. St. Paul's distinction between a living soul and a quickening spirit has the same import. The

layman is the living soul, but the saint is the active worker who is forcing open the gate to Perfection, or as Jesus said, who forces his way into the kingdom of heaven. The three conditions of the soul, then, are according to St. Paul:

(1) the state of ignorance when it is dead,

(2) the layman's life when he is only a living soul,

(3) the 'battling' saint who is a quickening spirit.

St. John's allegory of the Revelation proves to be of extraordinary interest for us in this connection, for he recognises there the distinction of the two paths, though only those who have made a close study of it will be able to follow fully his train of thought. He begins with the ignorant soul. He allegorises it as a lamb and describes it as appearing as though slain. Why does he choose the lamb as the symbol of the soul? Is it not because it is the object of tender regard on the part of the Shepherd—that is the Teacher—and because the sheep itself is the symbol of Life? The lamb is slain by ignorance. Ignorance of its real nature. It is as well to note here that ignorance is not merely a negative thing. It is an active force signifying the sense of identity with the physical body, and is embedded and rooted in personal prejudice and bodily love. But to return to our slain lamb. He opens the book of Life. This is John's way of saying that on the acquisition of right Faith the soul is born into Life, the life of the spirit, and that its name is forthwith inscribed in the book of Life. We next find the lamb standing on mount Sion; no longer slain, but alive and unwounded. The wounds and scars inflicted by ignorance and wrong convictions have vanished under the healing touch of Faith and Knowledge. John wishes to point out that the soul is as yet in the layman stage; so he places his lamb on the mountain of Sion. The soul is uplifted by the birth of Faith and partial Conduct, but still remains earth-bound, a lamb, though standing on the topmost peak.

In the next phase of its life the soul is symbolised by John as 'one like the Son of Man.' Note that he describes the soul as 'a' lamb and 'one' like the Son of

Man. This is to show that he is not weaving the life-story of one specially-favoured soul; it applies to any soul. The one like the Son of Man sits on a white cloud. He wears a golden crown. It is the crown of right Faith; the crown of victory that is his because having gained right Faith he has escaped from the body of the slain lamb. In his hand he carries a sickle. The time for the harvesting of the crop is ripe! The layman has become the saint; the lamb has given way to one like the Son of Man As such he is no longer world-bound; and so he sits on a white cloud in the heavens. The cloud is a symbol for advanced thought activity-Self—contemplation—in all its purity.

John also pictures the fourth stage of the soul in its pilgrimage on the Path. The one like the Son of Man has become the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. He wears many crowns in place of the single one he formerly wore. He is a warrior mounted on a horse, leader of a heavenly host. He wears a mantle soaked in blood; out of his mouth issues a sharp sword. The saint has done battle, as the blood-stained cloak is intended to reveal, and has thereby advanced on the path of self-conquest and self-realisation as the number of his crowns denotes. They symbolise the many excellencies gained in the contest against the demons of his lower nature. He has armed himself with a sword—the word of God; for as St. Paul says to the Hebrews, "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." His warriors, the heavenly hosts, are the saintly attributes. Thus armed his victory is assured. He is all-conquering and makes short work of his enemies.

St. John's Revelation is a fascinating allegory but having interpreted that part important for our immediate purpose we must not linger on it longer. It is time that we returned to the other scriptures to gather together the various passages relevant to our subject, and arrange them in some sort of order. I think we shall find then that they fall quite naturally into the two categories I have mentioned. As befits us who at present are merely seekers of the truth we will set out first to discover the rules laid down for a beginner. Let us, therefore sort out those passages in the Scriptures which contain the preliminary instructions.

The layman must, of course, know his immediate aim before he sets foot on the path mapped out for him by the Teachers. Since he is about to tread a preliminary path and not the real one the end will necessarily differ from the ultimate one. On the latter path the object to be striven after is the complete eradication of desire from the heart. This is not possible for the untrained layman, except under exceptional circumstances. He, therefore, will be content at first to subdue desire and to bring it properly under control. No longer is he to permit it to rove at its own sweet will seeking gratification where and how it can.

With his aim in the forefront of his mind the layman takes his first active steps along his chosen path. The first steps surely consist of the work to be done in connection with the deepening and strengthening of faith in the Doctrine, without which effort in the shape of right Conduct cannot be sustained. Clearly this is the layman's first duty for he can derive much benefit from it with regard to the subjugation of passions and desires. As he approaches nearer and nearer to an unwavering faith in the truth any lingering traces of bodily attachment and love of the world that he may still be entertaining will be destroyed, and along with them the gross passions of the worst type. So that by the time the threshold of sainthood is reached they will be calmed down to the degree of mild agitation.

As the layman learns more of the truth and acquires steadier faith in it his doubts will be destroyed, one after another. When the agitations of the points of doubt cease to trouble him, he will experience increasing satisfaction. If he continues steadily to perfect his faith until it is absolutely firm and unshakable then he succeeds in establishing perfect harmony and tranquillity within himself. His soul will experience for the first time the emotion of true delight. For it is lightened from a number of the burdens with which it was overloaded and de-pressed. Once the unwavering belief in truth is gained the mental impulses that constitute desires are loosened from their roots in the longings of the flesh and can never be the same again. For the lower personality that used to be the centre of so much loving care and attention it is the

beginning of the end. Nothing can interfere with the steadiness of a scientific faith acquired as the result of study and investigation. Even when certain issues remain to be worked out a general grasp of the essentials is assured and nothing can ever interfere with a settled conviction of the truth.

This is borne out by the teaching of the Fathers. When Clement demonstrates for the layman's benefit the power that faith has over the demon desire he declares: "There is therefore a measure of faith, which, if it be perfect, drives the demon perfectly from the soul." This is indeed so. If there is perfect faith no amount of suffering of affliction or hardship will deter the firm believer from his efforts to gain his freedom in the shortest possible time. Clement gives us as well some idea of the difficulties engendered by the confusion that arises from imperfect faith. Clearly implied is his wish that the novice will ever exert himself to deepen his faith, that by so doing he may establish a bulwark against which all doubt and desire will beat themselves in vain. "But if it has any defect, something on the part of the demon still remains in the portion of infidelity; and it is the greatest difficulty for the soul to understand when or how, whether fully or less fully, the demon has been expelled from it. For if he remains in any quarter, when he gets an opportunity, he suggests thoughts to men's hearts; and they, not knowing whence they come, believe the suggestions of the demons, as if they were the perceptions of their own souls." Clearly it is the first duty of the layman to do all in his power to strengthen his faith.

The next step that the layman takes is in the direction of Knowledge, linked as it is with Faith. Here again, everything possible is to be done to widen and and strengthen it, that it may give proper and adequate support to Faith. According to the Fathers full and complete Knowledge is of much value in the effort to suppress desire. For if, says Clement, "while in this life, they had placed before their eyes the punishments which they shall then suffer, they would certainly have bridled their lust, and would in no wise have fallen into sin." It stands to reason that the more understanding there is in the soul the more power there is to exercise

desire. "For the understanding in the soul" Clement goes on to say, "has much power for cutting off all its desires, especially when it has acquired the knowledge of heavenly things, by means of which, having received the light of truth, it will turn away from all darkness of evil actions. For as the sun obscures and conceals all the stars by the brightness of his shining, so also the mind, by the light of knowledge, renders all the lusts of the soul ineffective and inactive, sending out upon them the thought of the judgment to come as its rays, so that they can no longer appear in the soul."

Thus Clement shows us that the active cultivation of Faith and Knowledge can do much to help lessen the power of the 'demon'. This duty, it is clear, constitutes the very first steps of right Conduct. And Clement takes the further trouble of assuring us that we can take for granted the fact that the stronger and more active the longing to attain the desired end of freedom the more powerful will be the action of Faith and Knowledge in bringing sensual desire under control. Here is his sage comment on this truth. "As are men's wishes, so are their words; As are their words, so are their deeds; And as their works, such is their life."

We are now free to speculate, subject of course to the guidance of the Scriptures, on the kind of life best suited to the aspiring layman. There is a passage in Clement's writings, very beautiful and what is more important for our purpose, full of wisdom and help for the layman, which we would do well to ponder over before we go any further. "And therefore both young and old ought to be very earnest about their conversion and repentance, and to be taken up with the adornment of their souls for the future with the worthiest ornaments, such as the doctrines of truth, the grace of chastity, the splendour of righteousness, the fairness of piety, and all other things with which it becomes a reasonable mind to be adorned." Here is an excellent indication of how the Fathers consider the layman should conduct his daily life. With Clement's instructions before us we may proceed to

trace out the kind of life most conducive to the layman; to his soul's future welfare and his well-being while he is still part of the world.

The Christian Teachers would surely expect the good layman to marry and settle down to the life of a pious householder. Naturally he is to be a model of virtue. Is he not to cultivate 'the grace of chastity'? And is not one woman the best shield against all women, and the finest guarantee for chasteness? This idea of marriage for the layman conforms to the Scriptural injunction to be found in St. Matthew's Gospel. "For this reason shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife." Here Christ teaches that for the layman who has not yet conquered his passions enough to live a celibate life marriage is the only solution.

Since the householder is to remain in the world for some considerable time to come he should engage himself in some business or calling. It does not matter how humble so long as it is legitimate and honourable. Obviously he is not to follow any profession that is debasing or revolting. Trades dealing in the flesh, bones or skins of dead animals are not for him. As Clement teaches, a merciful heart is demanded of the layman. "God does not ask money of you, but a merciful heart and a pious mind," he tells us. If the layman deals continually with carcases and other animal remains the finer emotions like pity and sympathy which should well up in the properly constituted heart at such sights are likely to become blunted and coarsened, and the heart itself hardened.

As he goes about his daily life the householder, as the indefatigable Clement reminds us, should ever take care to keep his Ideal before him. As Clement neatly puts it on behalf of the Teachers: "Practice husbandry, we say, if you are a husbandman, but while you till your fields, know God." In the life of the ordinary materialist there are but two ideals; acquision and pleasure. Make money and enjoy life on it. For the follower of Truth there must in addition be others. Before anything else there is "the fairness of piety" as Clement is careful to tell us. Then can follow acquisition and pleasure. Of course, the layman also bears in mind his ideal of ultimate

salvation, though this latter is naturally more applicable to the saint than to the householder There is significance in the order of the first three ideals. Pleasure, for the householder, is always to be subordinated to wealth; but wealth in its turn is always to bow to piety and virtue. It is easy to see why this should be so. Inordinate pleasure can only bring ruin and misery in its wake. Wealth acquired without due regard to rules of piety is destructive of the best interests of an aspiring layman In short the layman believes in, and lives accordingly to, Christ's teaching as it is written in the Gospel of St. Matthew. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

I think we may take it that the householder is permitted to enjoy the pleasures and comforts of life always so long as he takes care to impose on himself at the same time the certain commendable limitations demanded of him by the necessity of keeping his aim in view. As he grows older, becoming more experienced, more disciplined by the life he has chosen, he will begin systematically to give up the pleasures of the world, imposing ever more restrictions on his enjoyment of them. If he is really in earnest he will do all this that he may prepare himself for the indispensable retirement from the world and its concerns. Let him do this and in due course of time he will find himself ready to traverse the direct path that will lead to the Immortality of which he dreams.

The householder with the well-balanced mind that knowledge of the truth brings him looks upon the world as an undesirable place wherein he must perforce sojourn until he has created the means whereby he can escape from it. With his clear understanding of the nature of his soul he realises that he has within his reach a unique opportunity for splendid achievements. He will be stirred to do his best for himself and his community; and his country, too. While living his own useful, active life he should, in fact, contribute his share to the well-being of his country. It is his duty to further its legitimate interests, the more so since its welfare is, to a certain extent, his own. He lives under its protection, and is thereby free—as he should be in all civilised countries—to practice

his religion as fully as he likes without fear of molestation or persecution. It is for this reason and because of the protection from which he benefits that he should contribute his quota to his country's welfare and its culture, without whose help the desired consummation, escape from the world, is not possible of attainment.

The pious householder, as Clement reminds us, is to select his associates—wife, friends and the like—with as much care and discrimination as possible. He is according to Clement, to "break off from unseemly and unbelieving companions, and keep company with the faithful, and frequent those assemblies in which subjects are handled relating to chastity, righteousness and piety." In this respect, as in all others, the worldly, sensual point of view is to be subordinated to the spiritual. Always the aim is to facilitate the steady onward progress of the soul towards its goal. If his wife holds beliefs hostile to his own there can be none of the spiritual harmony that should exist in life's closest partnership. Nothing, not even toleration, can take the place of the undoubted benefit that perfect accord and cooperation in all matters, spiritual and temporal, bring to a husband and wife of the same faith. No student of human nature will deny that our beliefs can be affected by the thoughts and actions of others We can receive confirmation and further strength from people of our own faith and discouragement from adherents of a different one, unless our faith is so firm as to be unshakable. In this age we seldom attain to that degree of faith which can withstand repeated temptation or attacks of scepticism, whether direct or insinuated. It is preferable, then, that the earnest householder should seek out his own kind and confine his associations with people outside his own sphere to special occasions at well-selected times and places.

We have been able to trace from the outline given us by the Teachers something of the general line of conduct expected from the striving layman. Now we may see how he is to work on his disposition; how he is to alter it, moulding it to bring it more and more into line with that of a soul diligently seeking its freedom. Obviously the beginning of this labour is to be the eradication of

the worst of those habits that serve to keep his soul enslaved. This means all actions which are performed from the most highly selfish angles. This is only to be expected. We have seen how according to the Doctrine every outward action means an influx of matter into the soul. Now action is of three kinds—evil, good, deifying. The latter, as we shall see, is practised only by the saint, so that for the time being we shall concern ourselves only with good and bad actions.

Now, the law of action is that the more evil and selfish the motive for an act the more uncontrollably moved by desire is the perpetrator and the greater therefore his excitement. The greater his excitement the more vulnerable is his soul and the stickier, the denser, the fusion of matter with its substance And conversely, the less selfish the act the lesser the excitement; the less the material influx, and the less adhesive. It stands to reason therefore, that one of the concerns of a striving householder is to transform evil action into good, that the material burden may be lessened and his soul become less thickly encrusted with it. In other words that the disposition of his soul may approximate more and more to its natural state. We see, then, that the aim of the householder must be to change the constitution or disposition of his soul into as pure a state as is possible for him and that to do this he is to replace evil action by good. The only way to begin this task is for him to wipe out all evil habits to which he knows himself to be addicted.

The most evil habit and one which the Teachers, would, if they could, have surely recommended to be given up is that of hunting animals for sport and includes shooting and fishing and suchlike. Is there anything more vile, more wantonly cruel and selfish than that man should destroy life solely for his pleasure? In St Matthew's Gospel Christ says: "But if ye had known what this meaneth I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." He says this with regard to animal sacrifice for religious purposes. His pain at such practices is evident enough. How would he have felt then, about killing purely for pleasure? Unfortunately his tongue was silenced, as the first half of

the passage I have quoted show. "If ye had known what this meaneth." His condemnation could not be expressed openly. He could only say what we all say when we are helpless to speak freely: "If you only knew."

Killing for pleasure shows the most appalling ignorance of the nature of the soul. It is tragic that man should take delight in destroying life, the vital 'stuff' that he shares with every other living creature, human or otherwise. He is utterly unaware of the grave consequences that recoil on himself from such brutal and meritless acts. If the state of mind of a person who hunts for pleasure is analysed three factors are seen. First, there is a total absence of thought of the pain and harm he is inflicting on innocent souls. Second, he is entirely engrossed in his own pleasure. Third, he is completely devoid of feeling for the suffering of his victims. We thus find that his predominant characteristics are thoughtlessness, selfishness and heartlessness. Can the soul encounter greater obstacles on the path of spiritual unfoldment? Is there a more dangerous enemy of his soul than the hunter's own self? If he had any idea at all of what he was really doing he would not be able to give up his special form of pleasure quickly enough.

Another evil habit fraught with dire consequences and therefore to be given up if the soul is to pursue its way to freedom is lying. Lying at once renders the ego unfit for spiritual progress It produces impurity of the heart, for the finer instincts are deadened and perverted, and the ennobling emotion of love is twisted into that of hatred. The liar's aim is to gain happiness for himself. But surely he does just the very thing which leads to unhappiness? When lying is resorted to the intellect is clouded and the natural serenity of the mind is replaced by worry and anxiety. In this way the ego is robbed of its happiness—that very thing which is its sole aim. Neither is there any material prosperity to be gained from falsehood, in the long run. If there was the forgers and makers of counterfeit coins and their brethren would all be millionaires. It comes to this. When the heart is made impure by untruth there is no peace of mind. For only when there is peace of mind is spiritual progress possible. It is as Christ reminds us in St. Luke's Gospel.

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." The soul can only make its presence known and felt when it is free from agitation and disturbance.

Now what other habits remain to be uprooted? Surely promiscuous sexual indulgence must come under the ban? It is well-known that all sexual promiscuity, fornication, over-indulgence and other abuses of the sex-function excite and strengthen evil passions and tendencies, and that this produces a weakening of the will-power. Was it not for this reason that Christ advocated marriage for the layman? The householder is not expected to be celibate, but it is presumed that he will marry, that he may confine his sexual indulgence to his marital partner. Even the least objectionable sex-relation, that between husband and wife, is an obstacle on the path to redemption, since it means that the attention is diverted from the higher to the lower self. From which we see that the eradication, or at least the stern control of sex-passion leads to a development of the will-power. We already know that passion is the actual cause of mental impurity, and that redemption cannot be had so long as the mind is not purged of all impurity. Never, therefore, should the layman allow his sexual fidelity to be jeopardised. No one who aspires to save his soul can afford to abandon himself to voluptuousness or promiscuity. Partial control at least, consisting in the proper choice of a wife and the regarding of the marriage-bed as inviolate is assuredly necessary. As Christ says in the Gospel of St. Matthew: "For this cause shall be a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh . . . . . What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." It is a dastardly thing to break up a home. As Christ says in the Gospel of St. Mark, "marriages are made in heaven." Again he repeats the same injunction, "those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

There are other bad habits that spring to the mind as being necessary for the layman to rid himself of if he is to gain that peace and tranquillity of mind at which he is aiming. Stealing, for instance. This has its roots in greed, one of the gosser passions that robs the enslaved soul

of its peace of mind. Thus it is definitely to be given up, that yet another channel of disturbance and unrest may be blocked. For the same reason gambling is also to be abandoned. Here again the soul is stirred by greed; and excitement is roused by the hope of getting something for nothing. It too, is a robber of the soul's tranquillity. And of a necessity wine and intoxicants are to be avoided. Their action, too, is to loosen and slacken the power of the will so that desires and passions with nothing to hold them in leash can rise up in overwhelming strength and set up a ceaseless clamour for gratification.

I can think of yet another evil habit the eradication of which must be obvious to all souls desirous of salvation—flesh eating. It is an abominable and disgusting practice; both for the animal whose carcase has been slaughtered to provide the flesh and for those of us who find pleasure in such filthy provender. We shut our eyes to Christ's own plea: "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." We disregard his command: "Thou shalt not kill." We want to say that he meant: "Thou shalt not kill man alone; animals thou mayest kill and devour." Why should we so callously demand of others their lives, that our filthy, perverted appetites may be gorged? With so much brutal indifference towards the sacrifice of that life which is so precious to every one of us who eats meat? We deliberately shut our eyes to the fact that life is dear to all; just as we keep away from the abattoir that when we sit down to enjoy our pork or beef we may not have the squeals or bellows of pain and terror ringing in our ears, see the frightened eyes appealing in vain for mercy, nor remember the writhings of the bleeding, dying carcases. What are we made of, that we can so comfortably and easily reconcile ourselves to so much wretchedness to please our palates? In very truth we eat up our chances of salvation. The soul is athirst with the longing to enjoy its natural qualities of joy, omniscience, power, and immortal life. And the best we can do for it is to feed it with the sources of its destruction, the very things that keep it outcast from its own country, the kingdom of Heaven.

When those who eat meat are possessed of half the knowledge of the nature of life that is contained in the

scientific interpretation of the Scriptures assuredly they will never dream of quibbling over this question to eat meat or not to eat meat? They will no longer say that only life as contained in the human body is to be respected and that it is of no account if it happen to be cast in animal form. As a matter of fact if we have no respect for Life itself we have none for animal or man. As we can see at the present time; for while the animal is looked upon as provender for stomachs man is regarded as fit fodder for guns. We have seen that all killing is harmful to the soul. Nor is it any the less so if it is for food. The same evil traits of selfishness, thoughtlessness and heartlessness are engendered by killing and eating flesh, giving rise to the same excessive agitation of the soul, which renders it more vulnerable to the material influx. The disposition, tender by nature, is hardened into becoming callous and cruel. This implies change and no change takes place in an organism without the intervention of a modifying material cause. In circumstances such as this, when violent emotions are aroused, the maximum changes occur and the soul's natural purity is defiled. Because the acts of killing and eating flesh are extremely selfish and hardhearted ones these two characteristics, already manifested, are ingrained still deeper into its substance, giving rise to still deeper impurity.

Those who have followed the Christian teaching as set out in this book can have no doubt whatsoever that flesh-eating is an action over-brimming with evil consequences for the soul. It is true that the New Testament contains no instructions which say point-blank that it is forbidden. But it is interesting to see that it does contain traces of a controversy on the subject that arose at a very early date in the Christian Church. Paul repeatedly refers to it in his writings. In the Epistle to the Romans he allots the whole of the fourteenth chapter to the subject. Why did he consider it necessary to devote that much space to a question that can be so easily settled by a plain yes or no? We must suppose that it was for the usual reason. We understand now the nature of the difficulties under which the Teachers laboured, which would make it inexpedient for Paul to express himself openly on the

question of meat-eating. In the first centuries of the Christian era the average convert to Christianity knew nothing about the allegorical significancy of the Biblical teaching. He accepted the new faith as it has always been accepted by the majority—blindly; at its face-value; from the literal import of the language of the script. Such men would have condemned the inner truth as heresy had it been revealed to them. As it was they prosecuted certain elders and bishops who preached the doctrine too openly, without sufficient covertness.

St. Paul could read such minds well and did not dare condemn meat-eating too openly. He had therefore to resort to framing his answers in such a way that he could avoid arousing dissatisfaction in the breasts of his unenlightened brethren without at the same time compromising the truth. In short, he was obliged to couch his condemnation of flesh-eating in the usual Biblical language of mysticism, which however beautiful and poetic it may be is misleading to say the least. In the fifteenth verse, he says: "Destroy him not with thy meat for whom Christ died." Christ did not come to help the body. He is the friend of the soul, the Ideal of Perfection in whose footsteps the soul is to follow. Destroy not then with meat the soul for whom Christ gave his life. In the seventeenth verse, Paul says: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The twentieth verse reads: "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence." Paul bids us not to destroy the soul by taking meat. All things are pure, he says. Certainly grains, cereals, vegetables and flesh are all made of the same material in their ultimate analysis. But, as he says in the fourteenth verse: "to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." The crux of St Paul's teaching is that man is not to eat with 'offence.' And when does he eat with offence? When he eats by causing hurt or pain to living beings. This is where the offence, and uncleanness of certain foods, come in.

The next verse explains why man is not to partake of meat and other such things. "It is good neither to eat

flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." What St. Paul says, is, in plain language: 'It is fitting that the body imbibes neither flesh nor wine nor anything else that causes its brother, the soul, to stumble in its struggle for progress. Do nothing to injure or weaken it.' A literal reading of the text is meaningless and absurd. If I eat meat it is not my brother who is destroyed; it is my soul. The veil covering this hidden identity is cautiously lifted a little in the twenty-second verse when Paul says: "Happy is he that condemneth not himself, in that thing which he alloweth." In other words, happy is he who neither by thought nor action condemns his soul to a perpetual imprisonment in the bonds of its 'brother,' the flesh.

In the same verse we are asked: "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." He who has faith is to see to it that he lives up to it—to the satisfaction of God; and not for what men may think of him. He is not to be a hypocrite And he who eats of doubtful food, food of which he does not know the content, and which his heart does not tell him is proper, is also damning his soul. For the twenty-third verse reads: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Doubt of the purity of food eaten leads the soul to damnation because he who eats things not sanctioned by his conscience as being proper to eat, cannot be deemed to have attained that pure spirit which is demanded for salvation. His will is not yet under his full control; it is still demoralised.

Judging from the information already revealed to our critical judgment those Biblical passages that imply that Christ indulged in meat and drink are not meant to be taken literally. This is surely another instance of the use of allegory, where the truth is taught without being directly revealed. "Strong meat" is the popular term for anything full-blooded and strengthening. Then might not meat as used in connection with Christ mean the soul-nourishing Wisdom divine? This is, in truth, strong meat for the intellectual babe; as St. Paul recognises in his Epistle to the Hebrews. "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a

babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are full of age, even those who by reason of us have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." This observation is further strengthened by certain verses in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he expressly refers to spiritual meat and wine. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye able." The people he was addressing were on the lowest stage of the layman's path for they were unable to tolerate anything stronger than 'milk'.

When we turn to the writings that comprise the A. N. C. L. we see that there is a section headed: "Jewish Meats." It is here that we find the Christian Teachers' own interpretation of the word 'meat' as used in the Scriptures. "And the true and holy meat was a right faith and unspotted conscience." Thus speaks Novatian. And again: "The meat, I say, true, and holy, and pure, is a true faith and unspotted conscience, and an innocent soul. Whosoever is thus fed, feeds also with Christ. Such a banqueter is God's guest; these are the feasts that feed the angels." In addition it is also worth noting that the wisdom divine—the Word—is figuratively described by Clement as "meat and flesh, and food, and bread, and blood, and milk." Clement also believes that because Christ was the bearer of the Word he too, is all these. "The Lord is all these to those who believe on Him." It would seem judging from these extracts of the Teachers' writings, that the ground is cut from under the feet of those who would have it that Christ was an eater of flesh.

We now know how fatal to the soul's welfare flesh-eating is. Its effect on the body is also bad, if we go by what the Christian Fathers think of it. "And the things which pollute at once the soul and the body are these: to partake of the table of demons, that is, to taste things sacrificed, or blood, or a carcase which is strangled, and if there be aught else which has been offered to the demons." And it is no use quibbling over words. The cruelty of it remains the same, whether it is strangling or any other method of killing.

It is customary for most people to think that flesh foods—meats, eggs, extracts, etc. are necessary for health and for that reason insist on including them in their diet. But it is becoming more and more recognised in the materialists' world of to-day, and even among the orthodox medical men, that they are not essential in any sense of the term, and that they are quite capable of doing more harm than good. In many diseases are they being eliminated from the diet, or at least drastically reduced. They produce over-acidity in the body, clogging it and thereby reducing its energy and efficiency. They lower the vitality of the system and encourage prostration and coarsening of the nerves. At the same time they feed desires and passions, over-stimulating them. But listen to what an eminent modern physician has to say on the subject. Doctor Bircher-Benner of Zurich has evidently given much care and consideration to the question of diet. In his book, "Food Science for All" he writes: "Neither with flesh, nor with poultry, nor eggs, nor caviare, not even with cow's milk, can one strengthen the weak, much less cure the sick. So many thousands have already had dearly to expiate such ignorant experiments; they have paid for them with early death or with long illness. The excessive proteids in the food are not only a bad source of energy . . . . . their breaking down in assimilation grievously overloads the organs, as any chemist familiar with the facts can tell you."

The observance of rules which aim at imparting health and strength to the body, and the elimination of all 'softness' and habits of luxury is a necessity for the layman. Plainly it is his duty to make his body capable of bearing the constantly increasing strain of trial and hardship involved in the more severe forms of self-denial. For this reason food plays the most important role in the physical training for asceticism. As the American investigator McCollum says, "diet is an essential, if not the most important factor for spiritual, moral, physical and cultural development and for resistance to diseases." We have just seen that the constitution of the body and the condition of the nerves are directly affected by the food taken in. Has it not been said that we are what we eat? If the nerves are to respond to the impulses of the will in

the desired manner, they are to be purified of any grossness they have accumulated. Where impure food is allowed to coarsen them, and the matter of the brain, none of the desired results can be hope for. This is recognised by Dr. Bircher-Benner. "By means of a heavy, dimly-lighted diet—rich in all the different kinds of flesh and stimulants—people not only invite diseases, they build within themselves barricades against the wisest and the most powerful friend of their life, against the spirit." Thus we find from another aspect of the soul's good yet another urgent reason why the layman gives up all flesh food.

The reasons that have just been enlarged upon are sufficient to show that for the sake of his soul and for the spiritual progress he is determined to make, the layman gives up all flesh-eating. But if it is of further assistance and encouragement to him in strengthening his resolution against eating meat to know that a properly-balanced vegetarian diet alone provides the perfect diet and why, then let us by all means go further into the subject from this standpoint. We may turn again to Dr. Bircher-Benner's book for elucidation. Many people, and among them a fair number who consider themselves vegetarians, place touching faith in the value of flesh-foods such as the egg in the diet. Dr. Bircher-Benner entirely refutes the idea of their value. He takes the egg and proceeds to show how much value there is in it. "The hen's egg is a complete synthesis of food material for the first period of growth of a living being. But try to feed a human being on hen's egg alone, or even with a diet in which hen's eggs form the chief constituent. This person will soon fall ill. The digestive organs will refuse to act, the kidneys will excrete albumen, and will presently become inflamed. And if you do not soon abandon your experiment, the grave injury to his organism will cost him his life. Why? Because the wisdom of life designed the food material of the egg only for the life-stage of the embryo chicken, characterised by certain conditions, for a stage of most rapid growth without motion." He says the same thing about milk. Again it is expressly for the new-born animal, not the grown-up man.

His book also contains a discussion on vitamins. "But what are the vitamins?" he asks. "Something intangible, something that exists, that acts, and yet something that no one has been able to find." He explains that they originate only in the vegetable kingdom. This, he thinks, makes the relation of animal to vegetable food more readily understood. He argues that it is known that vitamins are contained in animal products like cod-liver oil, milk and eggs. It is evident, then, that animal life can preserve and store the vitamins taken in their food. So that at least when the animal is alive, they are always present in their original vegetable values though mixed, so the Doctor explains, with other substances which as regards nutrition act rather as ballast. He concludes from this that milk, eggs and animal organs also possess nutritive value and that beasts of prey who swallow their victims alive and with the blood flourish on purely animal food. His next words are of particular value and interest to us. He says: "But things become quite different when the animal is slaughtered, the blood removed, and when the cellular tissue and organs have passed through the *rigor mortis* and the boiling, roasting, smoking, or salting process." Experiments show, he says, that then valuable energy is lost—energy that from the point of view of the nutrition of the eater of such food is a serious loss. "Therefore," he declares, "the nutritive value of the flesh preparations consumed by the human being is utterly deficient and inadequate. It is true that decomposable masses which moreover are mixed with characteristic stimulants are subjected to human assimilation, and a feverish activity is started in the organs of digestion and assimilation which gives an illusory feeling of strength but this is only in small part nourishment, rather it is encumbrance and deception. If you feed a person on butcher's meat, fish and poultry only, he will succumb in a surprisingly short space of time to severe poisoning."

Dr. Bircher-Benner has discovered the fact that plants represent condensed sun-light, an essential for health. He says of it: "The meaning of this discovery will be at once evident to you when you hear that it is as much as to say: for human nourishment fruits, nuts, and raw salads have the highest value, foods of animal origin

have the lowest." If this is so then certainly it seems odd that we rest content to partake of the essentials of life like vitamins, in a second-hand manner. Is it not more sensible to go straight to the original sources of supply, instead of receiving them second-hand? Let us bear this important discovery in mind and turn now to the Doctor's presentation of the case for the vegetarian diet. "With vegetable foods the case is altogether different. It is now proved that on a fruit and nut diet man can grow up, flourish, and perform full physical and mental work and enjoy splendid health. Whole nations, e.g., the Japanese, whose diet consists almost exclusively of vegetables, with unpolished rice as a basis, flourish and exhibit high physical, mental and moral virtues. In Japan, the man of the people—not forsooth the Europeanised Japanese physician—does not believe, as does the European, in the strength of flesh food. Accordingly the riksha-men, who had to run twenty-five miles a day and whom Professor Baelz of Tokio had offered meat for their extraordinary achievement, begged to be allowed to leave it, as it made them feel too tired and they could not run so well as before. From these facts we must conclude, whether we will or not, that the energy relations of fresh vegetables correspond with the requirements of the human organism to a far greater extent than do the best animal foods, such as milk and eggs; indeed that they alone completely meet the need.

"This result completely corresponds with my theory of the essential nature of chemical nutritive energy and its original identity with sun-light" Plainly it is the Doctor's firm belief that the vegetarian diet is the perfect one for health and efficiency. "These plant food-units contain everything which the human organism requires, and in the right proportions: enough of the various proteids, a wealth of the best energy givers, the carbohydrates, from which fats can at any time be formed in the organism, or the fats themselves; the minerals necessary for life (the nutritive salts) in the excited state and in the right proportion, and accordingly also the vitamins, or supplementary, or creative substances, which are arousing so much attention. No one therefore need wonder any longer that man can amply nourish himself,

grow and keep well with these alone, that the ox, horse, stag, roe, and even the elephant can build up their proteid rich bodies from grasses, herbs, leaves and blossoms. Not only the ninety-six per cent of energy-consumption in the maintenance of life but also the four per cent, the requirement for building up the body-substance, is entirely provided by these plant food-units. There is no reason to fear that their proteid-content will be insufficient. They are a complete food."

"It is true," Dr. Bircher-Benner continues, "that in the animal economy also the wisdom of life knows how to deal carefully with these nutritive values and to store them up in the animal body, so that the animal food substances and organs contain them and can serve man as food; but man does not consume the animal in the live state with skin, bones and blood like the beast of prey. He consumes parts of the animal after it is dead and after more or less elaboration by heat. Thus the original nutritive values suffer a not inconsiderable change. That the European attributes such a high value to 'proteid rich' flesh food is one of the fatal, fundamental errors . . ." No doubt vegetable foods also suffer a certain amount of deterioration in the processes of cooking, roasting or baking; but not to the same extent, and things like fruits, nuts, salads, are usually eaten uncooked.

It appears from this that the would-be vegetarian has nothing to fear on health grounds from the adoption of such a diet. Quite the reverse in fact; from this aspect as from every other his gain is enormous. And he need have no fear that his sense of taste will revolt against such a diet. All the many vegetables, fruits, nuts, cereals, together with sufficient quantities of milk and its different preparations—yoghourt, cream, cream-cheese and the like—sugar, and a few wholesome condiments and spices offer a great variety. From these varied and satisfying menus can be built up, with a proper understanding of conservative cooking and a little thought and practice, which are delicious, bland and nutritious in their nature.

As for the pleasures of taste, of which we make so much in insisting on an animal diet, it can be seen that taste does not exist in the things we take in or absorb.

It is an acquired thing, not in the food, which can taste differently at different times under different circumstances. Taste is in the attitude of the soul towards it. This is deduced from the fact that when a man first takes to smoking his instincts revolt against the fumes of nicotine. But with each repetition they become more blunted and coarsened; until they lose their natural delicacy altogether when they go so far as to long for what previously nauseated them. It is the same with all perverted tastes. The aesthetic pleasure which simple, wholesome, non-animal food affords to the soul on account of its natural purity cannot be experienced by the life-long meat-eater; simply because his taste has become too perverted and coarsened to appreciate it. His jaded dulled taste only relishes the most sumptuous and expensive preparations of carcases of bird or beast with the revolting stench partially or completely concealed by cooking and condiments and spices.

There emerges from this analysis of taste a fact that is definitely encouraging for the layman. He can train his instincts in respect to food in whichever direction he pleases. The testimony of vegetarians, and especially of those who have given up animal food from choice, shows that their meals are not less tasty because they are meatless. From my own experience I say that they are much more so. Not only that, my sense of taste is so keen, so highly developed that I have become a true *connoisseur* of food, with a clear understanding of its importance in daily life. Certainly thought, combined with knowledge and some care, is required in the preparation of vegetarian menus. But that is because as meat-eaters we are so taken up with our poultry and game, meat and fish, that most of us have never learnt to cook anything else, and have absolutely no idea how delicious other foods can taste when properly treated.

There remains one other point to be mentioned before the subject of meat-eating is left. I have often had it said to me that fruits and vegetables, too, have life and that I am cruel and kill when I eat them. I agree, because I cannot do otherwise, and reply that as I have not yet been able to train myself to abstain from eating altogether I restrict my depredations, until

I can, to those that are least harmful. From the point of view of the resulting harm and effect, all killing is not identically the same. Vegetables belong to the one-sensed type of life. They possess only the sense of touch and are seemingly lifeless. Animals are the five-sensed beings only distinguishable from ourselves by the gift of intellect—which so many of us who possess it abuse, or forget to use. The 'killing' of vegetables does not produce the same revulsion of feeling in us that the sight of carcases and the slaughtering of living animals does, or should do. Vegetables do not writhe when they are cut and torn open; they have no visible sense-organs that in animals look so stark and grim in death; they do not appeal for mercy with eyes and shrieks. Therefore, unlike the meat-eater, he who eats fruits and vegetables has not to shut his eyes to so much pain and suffering on the part of the victims of his appetite. The layman can, if he so wishes, go without eating even fruits and vegetables for certain periods. He can, say for a day every now and then, avoid them altogether, confining his eating to such things as cereals, milk, bread, etc. In this way he expresses something of his regret for eating even them and at the same time softens and purifies his heart still further.

To revert to the main subject of harmful habits. With the enumeration of these seven evil practices I think we have now covered the entire range of the major transgressions. The layman, then, is to concentrate his energy on the abolition of any of these to which he may be addicted. It is necessary to suggest that he takes a mental vow to cover his resolve to refrain from falling back into any of them in the future. He gains a good deal of help by so doing. The actual taking of a vow backs up the mental resolve; not because a vow cannot be broken but because it imparts greater firmness to the resolve. Its breach is a little more difficult than when committing transgression in a state of vowlessness. Besides, it crystalises and consolidates the change of life and thought that has taken place. It is a definite step forward in the progress of the soul.

The breaking away from evil habits marks the commencement of the spiritual life and if this is quickly

followed up by the adoption of certain further vows then occasional or accidental lapses are reduced to a minimum. There are five vows that can be taken which cover all the bad habits outlined above. The first is the vow of mercy, which means non-violence. He who takes this vows to refrain from killing and destroying. Killing means the destruction of any of the ten vitalities of a living being, since it is the severance of any one of these which leads to suffering and may be to the death of the victim. These vitalities are the five senses, bodily force, the functions of the mind and speech, breathing, and the force or duration of life. What is meant by violence is the injuring of any of these. It is forbidden the layman because it betrays in the perpetrator abysmal ignorance of the soul and its nature, because it is the source of pain to living beings, and because it is the immediate cause of hardheartedness. The vow extends to every kind of killing—for sport; for science; for ornaments, skins, furs, feathers and the like; for food; for revenge. There are only two exceptions to it, in defence, whether of one's self or one's country; and for the judge who punishes that law and order may be maintained. Only the lowest of the five types of living beings namely vegetables etc., are excepted from this vow of not killing or destroying intentionally and without justification. It is asking too much to expect that the layman in his less-advanced state should include the one-sensed beings like vegetables and cereals.

It will be seen from this that the quintessence of non-violence is love; an all-embracing love extending to every living being. In Christian parlance this tenet of non-violence is the creed of universal love. It is propounded and enjoined by the founder of Christianity himself. He sums it up very briefly and very simply. "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Such a short phrase to embrace so vast a department of ethics. It was mankind's misfortune, brought about by their own folly, that the doctrine of universal love could not be fully propounded. As it was, Christ was unable to explain that non-violence, the practical expression of love for all, is a sacred duty that every man owes his real self. It was left for Clement, some centuries later, to explain why. He begins by declaring boldly that "self-love is the foundation of

goodness." He then expresses the opinion that he who does not take the trouble to seek his own good is evil. "First of all, then, he is evil, in the judgment of God, who will not enquire what is advantageous to himself." Clement's explanation is that the man who remains in wanton ignorance of his real nature has no proper esteem for his own self. How then, is he to have any for others? In short, he who is not even his own friend cannot but be an enemy to others. Is it not as Clement asks? "For how can any one love another, if he does not love himself?" Clement has more to say on this subject. In fact he asserts that love is the key to immortality. "Love is the keeping of commandments which leads to Knowledge, and the keeping of them is the establishment of commandments from which immortality results." As he says, knowledge "terminating in love, thereafter gives the loving to the loved." If the layman's expression of love for all is not to die still-born on his lips, then he neither hurts nor destroys any living being.

Thus we see the first Christians teaching that man's attitude to others is simply the expression of his regard for his own self. It is for this reason that it comes naturally to the layman to carry out Christ's maxim of love for all. He is the enlightened one, the possessor of the Wisdom divine. If he really understands it, and really believes in his own inner divinity, then in all sincerity he loves his true self. He will cherish it tenderly, guard it against evil. He will seek to carry out the principle of love for all, and is therefore the well-wisher of all; himself and everyone else. He loves all men as brothers; and the animal no less than the man. Never does he wish harm to any living being, man or beast. How can he afford not to do otherwise? If he has no respect for the feelings or life of others how can he be said to regard his own life as divine since in all essential respects they are the same? In his loving regard for others he demonstrates the love be bears for his own self. It is for this reason that he extends it to all living beings. He is fully aware of the fact that he has the same kind of Life-force that is present in us all. The unenlightened ridicule the Christian Teachers as impractical idealists, as idle dreamers advocating a creed too perfect to be put

into practice by the imperfect inhabitants of an imperfect world. How little they know of the exact and sober thinking that enable the founders of Christianity to propound a doctrine that comprises the only scientific way to freedom. In the light of what has just gone we may now understand why the layman must do his best to carry out the counsels of perfection enjoined on him. Never again can we read with scoffing scepticism Christ's exhortation to "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

And when the layman takes himself in hand and begins to understand his capacity in regard to non-violence he will be surprised at the changes that occur in himself. For non-violence really covers all other virtues and the vow of non-violence all other vows. We shall soon see that other vows only represent a partial aspect of the vow of non-violence. So that from the first instance the layman refrains from all the worst forms of vice and viciousness. Which means that his still-savage nature is ennobled. As soon as he puts into practice the doctrine of universal love he becomes the most law-abiding citizen, for automatically his actions conform faithfully to the rules and decencies that a self-respecting community imposes on its members. With a proper understanding of the nature of his soul and the consequent careful regard for its welfare, he entertains a wholesome and salutary fear of the effect on it of evil behaviour. He becomes incapable of trickery, hypocrisy, dishonesty, in any form. He does not cheat the Government of its dues; he does not resort to trickery to earn an easy dishonest penny. He is the best of neighbours, the kindest of friends. He converts the ill-feeling of enemies into amity and goodwill.

Attributes like truthfulness, honesty, chastity, are all covered by the creed of love for all beings. The enlightened layman in carrying out its injunctions does not intentionally hurt another's feelings or do him harm by untruthfulness. He does not cheat or deceive him. Nor run away with his wife or daughter. And gradually, as his capacity increases, he adopts all the higher expressions of non-violence; those that call for ever more strict self-denial and virtuous living; until the time comes when he

has prepared himself for the austere life of sainthood and is ready to enter into it. By his vow of non-violence the former half-civilised man is lifted up and placed on the threshold of saintliness. And such is its power that the same uplifting process will bear him on to Godhood, as we shall see.

The vow of non-violence is strengthened by the taking of four others. They are minor vows, all subsidiary to the first; just so many aspects of it, but they serve to strengthen it in all its many ramifications. The second vow springs naturally from the first. It is the vow of truthfulness. Now the first principle of love is justice and this is rooted in truthfulness. If the layman does not observe truthfulness it shows a lack of self-respect, and as we have learnt from Clement, in the absence of respect for himself he can have none for others. So that the vow of truthfulness is as much a necessity for the layman as that of non-violence. Truthfulness brings justice in its train and provides sufficient guard against such transgressions as harsh and violent speech, revealing the secrets of others in idle talk and gossip, forgery and all other such things. Here again the layman derives benefit from the observance of his vow. His soul gains additional serenity and freedom from disturbance, for peace and harmony follow in the wake of truthfulness and justice. These in their turn beget love. As a natural reciprocation he is treated by his fellows with sympathy and benevolence, respect and loyalty.

Following hard on the heels of the vow of truthfulness comes that of non-stealing. Properly understood, and practised in its full scope, it covers all offences against property. In addition to not stealing the layman does not take anything that is not freely given. In trade he does not sell goods that are below the standard, nor use false weights and measures. He does not intentionally use counterfeit notes or coins, receive stolen property, employ or encourage thieves, nor harbour them. Nor does he perjure himself for gain.

The fourth vow is that of chastity, and this means in addition, that all social misbehaviour is thereby avoided. The layman takes the vow of chastity to strengthen his

resolve to curb sexual passion for he recognises that it is one of the great enemies of spiritual progress. The vow is transgressed by indulgence in artificial or unnatural gratification, the use of aphrodisiacs, encouraging others in sexual lust, looking lustfully at any woman other than his wife, and other such behaviour.

The fifth vow also serves a useful purpose. Its object is to put the curbing rein on the instinct of acquisitiveness. The layman must learn to exercise restraint in the use of worldly goods and possessions, and to set a limit on them. Such a vow is calculated to lessen the constant craving for worldly things; it checks excessive pride in them and the sense of material greatness and prosperity. Finally, it engenders the spirit of contentment and this is the real guarantor of the soul's tranquillity. In addition the vow acts as a powerful check on stealing, and other such misdemeanours, because it crushes out the tendency towards wrong-doing at its very inception. We see from the Scriptures that Christ himself enjoins the limitation of worldly possessions. In the Gospel of St. Matthew he teaches: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but in heaven, where the moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves break not through and steal." Nor is the layman to covet worldly things, for his life "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." He is commanded "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourself bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."

It can be seen that these five vows merely reproduce the moral code of the best-civilised communities. But of greater importance than this they are aids to the practising of Christ's injunction to "love thy neighbour as thyself." The layman does not then shy at them as being too binding, too restricting, too difficult to follow. The man who says that he needs no vow and does not want to be bound by any is not really clear and decided in his mind. Though he may be inclined towards disciplinary training, and sees the necessity for it, his thinking is still muddled and confused. He still has lingering doubts and suspicions that keep him from hurling himself wholeheart-

edly into the thick of the spiritual fray. The eager layman, on the contrary, wants to be bound by them. He adopts them joyfully, recognising them as a helpful aid to his spiritual progress. With a clear understanding of them and how they are to be kept, he has no qualms about them. With his Faith fed and ever sustained by right Knowledge he sees that resolute self-denial backed by vows is the only way by which he can train his will, and purge it of all weaknesses. And if he breaks them he cheerfully pays penance for the violation. We shall not stop to linger over this subject of penance now for we shall deal with it fully in the following chapter, in connection with saintly conduct.

The golden rule by which the layman is guided with regard to renunciation is to exert himself in its observance to the full extent of his power. As soon as there is any likelihood of doing himself harm by over-exertion he stops; as he stops exercising his body at the first signs of strain or exhaustion. There is a close analogy between the development of the physique and the training of the will. Insufficient exercise does not develop a bodily muscle; over-exercise does harm by bringing on fatigue. In the same way the will is not developed by anything that falls short of full exertion; nor by anything productive of excessive strain. Within these limits the layman exerts himself wholeheartedly to develop and maintain the spirit of imperturbable equanimity in all circumstances and conditions.

To this end there are certain minor forms of asceticism well within the scope of the layman to practice. They are of great value, probably in fact, indispensable. We know by now that it is the unceasing activity of the embodied soul which is responsibe for its bondage in the flesh; that the eternal absorption of fresh molecules of matter ever renews the bondage, forging new chains to replace the old; that the soul is also responsible for its constantly changing circumstances; that as the new particles of matter flow in they ceaselessly modify its constitution, while the old particles are dislodged, displaced, ejected. It is something like a pond fed by a pipe, where a constant inflow and evaporation of water goes

on. The 'evaporation' of matter can be helped and speeded up considerably with the aid of asceticism. Pure gold is separated from the alloy with which it is found in its natural state by intense heating of the impure compound. In the same way asceticism burns up the impure matter in the substance of the soul. It is a veritable purification by fire. Asceticism is renunciation and the fire of renunciation burns up the cravings of the senses and the roots of desire. As Christ says in the Gospel of St. Matthew, we shall be baptised "with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

Naturally our layman confines himself to minor forms of asceticism. Even so he finds plenty of scope for self-denial and the strengthening of his will. Asceticism is of two kinds, external and internal. One leading to control of the body, the other of the mind. External control, which means self-restraint, is necessary to control the will. We have already seen that the Teachers thoroughly approve of the idea of chastening the body. If, as Clement has it, the demons of desire enter men's bodies for the sake of the pleasures they get, "it is manifest that they are put to flight by suffering."

From what the Teachers have to say on the subject it seems that fasting is a splendid method by which the body is purified and its clamours lessened. In the "Penitential Discipline in the Early Church" it is said: "Fasting was instituted for the humiliation of the body." The value of fasting in the eyes of the Teachers is stated graphically in the Prophetic Scriptures of the A. N. C. L. "Especially does fasting empty the soul of matter and make it, along with the body, pure and light for the divine words." Not only is the soul purified, but the body also is lightened and the brain cleared for the better reception and understanding of divine wisdom. From the same source we see that the Fathers consider that the thought of death, bringing with it concern for the future—the life after death—should be enough to wean us from our usual custom of uncontrolled eating, and that this is all to the good. "The vivid remembrance of death is a check on diet and when the diet is lessened the passions are diminished along with it."

Tertullian suggests what in his opinion is a much better way in which the layman may employ his mouth. He thinks it a good idea that instead of using it for meat and drink, he uses it for a higher purpose, for spreading the Gospel of truth. He says: "Now you have received your mouth, O man, for the purpose of devouring your food and imbibing your drink: why not, however, for the higher purpose of uttering speech, so as to distinguish yourself from all other animals? Why not rather for preaching (the Gospel of) God, that so you may become even his priest and advocate before men?" Tertullian further points out how Christ set an example to those who cared more for sensual food than spiritual by fasting for forty days, that they might see the respective values of 'bread' and spiritual food in their proper perspective. "Thereupon the Lord, driven apart into desert places after baptism, showed by maintaining a fast of forty days, that the man of God 'lives not by bread alone', but by the word of God; and that temptations incident to fullness or immoderation of appetite are shattered by abstinence."

Here also in this matter of fasting the layman does as much as he feels able to do. He sets for himself certain periods during which he refrains from all food and drink—even though it be only for a part of a day. He gains considerably from such fasts for on the one hand the senses are controlled and purified, and on the other the sense of attachment to objects of bodily enjoyment is lessened. On other occasions he avoids taking full meals. Habitual practise in this form of self-restraint goes a long way towards eradicating laziness from the system. There is no chance then of it becoming clogged or overloaded and this in its turn means that fresh energy is imparted to the mind. The layman disciplines his appetites still further by refusing certain things on certain days. To reject those kind of things that impart savour to foods is a good form of self-denial. One day for instance, he takes no sugar, another no salt, and so on with milk, cheese, yoghourt, oil, butter, etc. He chooses one for each day of the week. There are physical austerities other than fasting that the layman practises so that his body may be further disciplined and the soul freed still more from disturbance. Periodically he goes into retirement for a

while, away from his usual haunts. He confines himself to his room once a fortnight, or month, or quarter; or just as often as he is able, and devotes himself to study and meditation.

The aim of the layman in bringing his will under control is to establish his mind firmly in right belief. To this end he respects all those who have such belief and who are endowed with true wisdom. He observes the rules becoming to a layman and pays due respect to those other laymen and saints who carefully follow them. He reveres the Scriptures of Truth. He acquires the truth with all energy. There are five ways by which he does this; by reading; questioning those with greater knowledge; meditation; retaining in his mind what he learns. While engaged in learning all he can of the truth he does his best to carry it to others who want to hear it. All these practices, incidently, are really only so many different forms of meditation. The layman ever discriminates now between soul and body, for he realises at last that his real self is not the physical one. Thus by these observances of external and internal discipline he contrives to to be faithful to the injunctions of the Teachers, that he may say with St. Paul: "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection lest . . . I myself should be a castaway." For he believes wholeheartedly with Clement that "self-control . . . . perfected through knowledge . . . . makes the man Lord and Master of himself."

It is to establish steadiness of mind that the layman submits himself to bodily discipline and hardship. But he realises that belief also plays its part in connection with this. There are in fact three things that he always bears in mind. He knows that belief is the architect, the builder of character; that the essence of the soul is pure intelligence, and that it is influenced by its beliefs to the extent that it actually becomes what it believes itself to be. He understands, then, that steadiness of mind is not possible without a corresponding fixity of belief in the first instance. He knows that before he can expect any far-reaching results belief is first to mould the essence of his spirit. But a fixed belief is impossible without the exercise of meditation. Therefore meditation, with its subsidiary branches, reading, studying, questioning and

the like, is an inherent part of the thoughtful layman's everyday life. It leads him to truth, it brings peace to his soul. It takes him in the end to his freedom.

St. John's Revelation gives evidence that the Teachers understood the value of meditation. He allegorises it as a plague of locusts. They do not kill their victims, but they do harass and torment them; and they possess a sting in their tails; which means that their effect is not instantaneous or immediate. This is John's way of saying that meditation does not completely banish desire. What he wants to say is that it gives the soul respite from the onslaughts of wordly desires. For it has the power to check their activity and keep them at bay. The ever-desiring mind needs stern discipline. We have no need to remind ourselves of the fact that it is ever given to wander. It darts swiftly hither and thither, from object to object, with all the lightning rapidly of thought. Full of desire, entirely engrossed in sense-gratification, volatile, irresponsible, unused to restraint, the mind is the most difficult thing to control. The cultivation of the habit of meditation allows the mind to establish itself in peace and tranquillity, when it may examine and ponder over the all-important Truth.

It is natural that the layman who has acquired something of right Faith and Knowledge should wish to think intensively of the truth, and of his soul and its future welfare. Impressed with the truth of the continuity of life he is led to reflect on the circumstances in which his soul will find itself after the somatic death in this world. Meditation on the nature of the soul and other substances leads him to the conviction that the future is very much his concern, and that it is in his own hands to make or mar. He comes to the conclusion that as a sensible man he ought to give up living the life of an animal engrossed in the enjoyment of the senses, and live the life conducive to his spiritual good. Arriving at this conclusion his mind wants to know what others have said on the subject. It is in this way that the process of meditation is begun in his mind. He soon gains greater insight into the seven essentials of Knowledge and his faith in the Truth increases. The outcome of this is that his conduct becomes characterised by purity of thought,

speech and action; until there comes a time when the longing for liberation from bondage begins to actuate him intensely from within. It is then that he throws off the shackles of worldly attachment and takes to the saint's path of uncompromising ascesticism. Thus by meditation does he direct his mind in the right way of thinking and lead it to such fixing of belief that it remains unaffected by any attack from doubt.

The layman spends as much time as he can spare on meditation and sets aside a certain period every day for the purpose. Whenever it is at all possible he chooses the early morning, that he may derive throughout the day the maximum benefit from the precious help it gives. He meditates on the nature of the seven essentials; on the transitoriness of the things of the world—health, wealth, friends, family. He comes to recognise the fact that religion is his only helper, his only friend. He reflects on the nature of soul and body. He realises the essential filthiness and indecency of the body, with its flesh, its fat, its organs, its saliva, its refuse; all its pitiably clumsy machinery that the materialist thinks so wonderful. What a fool, the layman thinks, to allow such a sink of filth to be master instead of slave. Directing his thoughts along these paths he tries to tear out the evil passions from his heart, that tranquillity may reign in their stead.

From this he passes on to examine his doings of the past twenty-four hours. He regrets any sins of commission or omission and resolves to make them good, if possible. In doing this he obeys Clement's instruction to newcomers in the Faith "to repent truly of their past doings." He determines not to fall into the same error again; he tries to undo any harm that he may have done. All this he does in his effort to eliminate evil action from his conduct. Next he endeavours to subdue personal likes and dislikes. He instantly forgives, and without being asked, if anyone insults him. This, so that he may develop the spirit of equanimity. Lastly, he tries to withdraw all attention from the body, for a few moments, and to direct it towards his soul. This cultivates the sense of detachment from the body. In other words, it is soul-culture. His aim is to lose himself completely in

contemplation of his soul. Passing on from mere metaphysical speculation he endeavours, by so immersing himself, to realise the inner meaning of Life by feeling its pulsation in his own being. He tries to analyse every movement, every tremor of the mysterious substance. This self-contemplation, this losing of the self in the self, is the aim of layman and saint alike, for when carried out to perfection its culmination is salvation. Only then, when attention has been persuaded to loosen its grasp of the body do the chains that unite it to the soul fall off. But to return to our layman engaged in the preliminary exercise of meditation. His exercise well done, he gets up at the end of the period a better man, with additional fortitude to face the temptations of the day.

Having pointed out the need for daily meditation we are now ready to collect together in a brief *resume* the rules of piety enjoined on the layman. First comes renunciation, which includes such things as non-attachment to worldly things, and the giving of charity. This conforms to the commandment: "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." Charity, incidentally, is of four kinds and includes gifts of food to the hungry, medicine to the sick, knowledge to the ignorant, help or protection to the distressed. Then follows self-restraint. The physical self is to be chastened, and denied pleasure, that the pure attributes of the soul may be brought into manifestation. Then comes the abolition of the four principal passions. Greed is conquered by self-denial. As it is said in the Gospel of St. Matthew: "Go sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Anger with forgiveness. Remember when Peter came to Christ saying: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" And the reply was: "I say not unto thee until seven times; but until seventy times seven."

In like manner pride is to be replaced with humility—"Neither seek ye greatness before one another, nor dominion over mankind; but whosoever will be great among you let him be your servant, like unto the Son of man who came not to be ministered unto but to minister." So

Christ teaches according to St. Matthew; and in the same Gospel we see the reward. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." And: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself.... ...the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." In like manner deceit is conquered by truthfulness and straightforwardness. In the Gospel of St. Matthew Christ brands deceit as an evil thing that "defiles" him who resorts to it. Violence and unthinking cruelty is replaced with universal love and mercy. The layman follows Christ's bidding as found in St. Luke's Gospel. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." For he knows that it is as the Sermon on the Mount says. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." In addition he does not spend his energy in purposeless activity and idle talk, for he pays heed to Christ's teaching on this point, as reported by Matthew. "I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Similarly he foreswears all oaths and blasphemies, that he may avoid the vehemence of excitement. Again in doing this, he is only obeying the Biblical command. "I say unto you, Swear not at all.. ......But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Lastly, he cultivates chastity and purity of mind, for "blessed are the pure in heart." These rules have been laid down by the Teachers that the layman may learn to subjugate his passions, and thus keep pure and spotless his "garment of Baptism", as they have it. As Clement says of this, "the things which pollute it in actions are these: murders, adulteries, hatreds, avarice, evil ambition." All these evil acts result from unbridled passion allowed to have full sway.

Thus the Teachers have taken us by the hand, as it were, and in the realms of intellect we have walked with them the length of the path mapped out by them for the halting steps of the layman. We understand now that it is the preparatory course of asceticism. We see that it is as essential to steady progress on the advanced stages of the journey as is a good foundation to any stable edifice. We recognise that the object of this minor path is to develop the spirit of self-denial and renunciation in such

a way that its steady sustentation is assured. To become a God it is necessary to learn to behave as one. This the layman learns, if painfully and laboriously at first, then with ever-increasing ease, until he is ready for the course proper. The layman's path is the way of the pilgrim's progress. Ever he bears in mind Christ's dictum to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works" His endeavour is to cleanse his will of its desires that the pure light of his spirit may shine through for all to see.

There remains one more thing that the Teachers wish to impress on us. It is the necessity of each man working out his own salvation for himself, without any reliance on anything or anyone other than his own soul. Paul states this so clearly that there is no chance of his direction being mis-understood. His words are recorded in his Epistle to the Galatians. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. " The soul rejoices in all its fulness only at the fruits of its own labour. Taking delight in the works of another being, however exalted, is simply admiration for another's attainment, and is nothing compared with the joy that comes from the successful fruition of one's own labours. Besides, a sinner remains a sinner though he attach himself to ten thousand Christs, unless he "proves his own work," that he may have rejoicing in himself.

Most Christians to-day place touching faith in the belief that Christ can free them and so save them all the trouble of doing it for themselves. But the Teachers, and none more so than Christ himself, are adamant on this point that only the soul can save itself. Have we not been told that the violent take the kingdom of heaven by force? The Teachers also point out that it is a grievous error on our part to rest comfortably in the belief that as long as we believe in Christ we shall be saved. It is a comforting belief to hold, that somehow, in some way or other, someone else can do all the heavy spade-work that is required; that, as long as we "have faith", in some miraculous way Christ's body can bridge the yawning

gulf that stands between us and salvation. The root of this belief lies in a sluggish mentality combined with fear and a lamentable lack of scientific knowledge. It suits the lazy ones very well to think that as long as we make obeisance to a God and his son everything will be all right; it will be enough to redeem us, and get us to heaven. I suppose it saves one a good deal of uncomfortable thinking, too. There is no need to make any effort to understand anything about one's nature. One thinks, just leave it to God; he in his mercy will see to everything. Then very conveniently one can forget everything about any work to be done by one's self. One need know nothing about the only kingdom of heaven there is; the one within. One need know nothing about the freeing of one's self, one's soul, before one can reach that heaven. One's own way is so much more simple and convenient. Just pay the right amount of homage to Christ, and "believe." Then one crushes down any tiny suspicion that perhaps it is not quite so easy as all that; that perhaps one has to exert oneself in this matter of salvation, after all. But no, it cannot be, one hastens to reassure oneself. Does not Christ himself say: "I am the resurrection and the life?" Thank goodness, one thinks, and heaves a sigh of relief at such "proof."

How mercilessly iconoclastic are the laws of Nature. Think of it; to have one's hopes of an easy salvation dashed to the ground like this. But why do we not bestir ourselves to understand Christ's teaching properly? Why are we content to accept as truth myths and allegories that taken literally can never be reconciled with rational thought? Why do we allow ourselves to trust in the idle phantasy that any being, however divine, can carry us on his back to heaven? Why do we let ourselves slip into this utterly sloppy and unscientific way of thinking? Goodness knows Christ does his utmost to tell us that he does not want personal adoration and glory: and that he of himself can do nothing to save anyone. Except to give us knowledge of the truth; to show us how each can attain his own heaven for himself. His mission to mankind was conceived with one object only. To "lighten their darkness." He tells us so, again and again. It is not his fault that we choose to interpret his teaching in

a way that we think more convenient to our aims. Why do we not listen to him with ears properly attuned to hear his message?

It is in the Gospel of St. John that Christ tells us that he is "the resurrection and the life." His meaning is that in the doctrine he seeks to give us is the truth whereby we may live. By opening our hearts to receive his doctrine—not his own personal self, but the knowledge he brings as a torch to dispel the darkness of death into which we are fallen—we are resurrected from spiritual death to spiritual life; to a life that is everlasting. In the next verse he says: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" Here again he is not to be taken literally. The 'faithful' and affectionate dog follows a kind master slavishly, living for him—in him if you like—believing in him, heart and soul. But no one ever thinks that the master can ever take the dog into himself, in any way, however much he returns the animal's affection for him. Why then should we think that Christ can absorb us into his being? What Christ means is that whoever believes in his teaching and lives under its guidance can never die; because for the spirit conscious of itself and its divinity there is no death. In the eighth chapter of the same Gospel he expressly states this himself. "Verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying he shall never see death."

In the same chapter he says: "I am the light of the World: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He is the light, because he possesses the divine knowledge. But he does not claim this for himself alone, for in the Sermon on the Mount he says: "Ye are the light of the world." The knowledge is in us also. The difference between us and him lies in the fact that his knowledge, his light, was in the foreground of his consciousness. A city set on a hill, that cannot be hid! Whereas ours lies smothered in ignorance. The candle pushed under the bushel.

Christ does not want blind worship and adoration for himself; he does not seek even the approbation of men. "I receive not testimony from men: but these things I say that you might be saved." He appears to be fired with

the zeal of a Saviour, one who because he possesses the truth knows himself to be saved and longs therefore for all others in like manner to save themselves. He had no thought of honour and glory for himself. He says so. "I receive not honour from men." "And I seek not mine own glory." He was full of the glory of his doctrine, burning with a passionate desire to give it to all men. How he must have chafed at the gags of persecution and fear that were stuffed into his mouth by those very people with whom he had come to share his glorious possession. He did his fettered best; all that he could do. In the same Gospel, St. John's, he expresses his object and his attitude towards humanity. "And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world but to save the world. He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him." His word will save those who want to hear it. As for the others, there is another who will judge them. "The word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day." "The truth they reject will be their judge." Having passed unheeded it will revenge itself, as it were, by jealously hugging to its breast the only chance they have of everlasting life. "For .... the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting." When men spurn Christ's teaching, wantonly, of their own free will, they recklessly throw away immortality.

Christ does not set himself up to judge those who choose to reject his doctrine but he does give very clear indication of his dislike of personal worship and adoration. "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" He calls the bluff of lip-service when he bids: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." In St. Matthew's Gospel he gives warning to those who pay such service. "Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." For those who seek to carry out his commands he has words of regard and encouragement. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Not only is each man to see to his own salvation, but he is forbidden, in any excess of zeal, to compel others by force to his views. Those zealous ones who have acquired the Faith and long for others to acquire it too, even under the compulsion of force, are expressly forbidden by the Teachers to use any such method. If a man is to be saved it will be only by his own passionate longing for freedom. Says Clement on this point: "It is impossible for a man to be steadily good except by his own choice. For he that is made good by compulsion of another is not good; for he is not what he is by his own choice. For it is the freedom of each one that makes true goodness and reveals real wickedness."

Thus we have gathered ample proof, and mostly from Christ, the "Saviour's" own lips that each man is in very truth to "bear his own burden." But the layman is not to rear at that and let it frighten him away from the idea of freedom; nor is he to smother his longing for it. We find encouraging words in the writings of the Teachers that will help him stay his course. Clement writes words of wisdom to soothe his nervous qualms. "But ye are not able to endure the austerity of salvation," he writes, and adds, "be not afraid lest the multitude of pleasing objects which rise before you withdraw you from wisdom. Yourself will spontaneously surmount the frivolousness of custom, as boys, when they have become men throw aside their toys." St. Paul also says the same thing in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." As the layman makes progress, developing gradually from the half-civilised man into the saint he throws off the childish things that used to please him as an intellectual babe. And in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians the layman is again given the same comfort, with an added explanation. "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look at the things which are seen but not at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

When the layman looks from the lowly bottom rung of his ladder to the topmost one lost in the heavens, beyond his range of vision, it is quite natural if he is filled with fear and apprehension. But if he remembers to look only at the rung immediately above his head and at each step he makes contents himself with climbing on to the next, without looking at the top ones, he will reach his goal without shedding half the tears of blood he expected to. At each step of the way he further fortifies and equips himself for the still more difficult battles to come. But what is really most effective in keeping the layman on the path is his own fear of failure, and the fear that he will never attain the freedom he longs for. The writers of the Syriac Documents have their own way of saying the same thing. "For it is not God that one dreads, but the falling away from God. He who dreads this, dreads falling into evil, and dreads what is evil. And he that fears a fall wishes to be immortal and passionless "

So the layman finds strength in his very fear of falling away and remembers Christ's injunction to be found in St. Luke's Gospel. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord . . . . that when he cometh, they may open unto him immediately." Let him strengthen himself and make all his preparations; that when the soul within him feels an irresistible, unconquerable urge to seek its freedom, he will be ready to do its bidding. St. Paul, who is always so quick and enthusiastic to encourage the humiliation and subjection of the body, tells the Romans that whatever one suffers for the sake of liberation is nothing as compared with the magnificent reward. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

And now, with the Teachers' blessed words of cheer and comfort ringing in his ear to cheer and encourage him, we may safely leave the layman on his chosen path. It is time that we pass on to untangle the saintly path from the ensnaring weeds of myth and fable, and the overgrown tangles of allegory that keep it effectively hid from the unenlightened eye.

CHAPTER XI.

To go back to the metaphors of St. John's Revelation. We have finished our examination of the life of the soul in its shape as a lamb. Let us now investigate it in the form of the one like the Son of man. We remember that the one like the Son of man sits on a white cloud with a sickle in his hand. He has brought himself safely through the trials and difficulties that lay astride his path as a layman. Now, as a saint, he is no longer bound to the earth and its pleasures; he sits on a white cloud—the cloud of spiritual, holy thought. He lives, in other words, in the pure world of the kingdom of heaven within him. In his hand is the sickle. The seeds of right Faith that he sowed and tenderly nurtured as a layman have produced their holy crop. The time is ripe for their garnering. The ugly weed of desire that flourished so hardily in his heart now lies mortally sticken, awaiting the death-blow, powerless to avert it. The layman is free at last to pursue his way along the direct path that leads to emancipation.

The man who emerges from the layman's stage ready for the higher path is a very different being from the one he was when he first adopted right Faith. He has by now rid himself of all the worst forms of passions and emotions. He has given up all worldly activity; he is completely withdrawn from the world. From now onwards, on the "strait" and narrow path of sainthood, he devotes his energy exclusively to the well-being of his soul. As an advanced layman he has relinquished the wealth and pleasure ideals of his early layman's days. This is the time when he even gives up the ideal of piety which has nourished and sustained him thus far, to set up in its place the fourth and last ideal—salvation.

The layman, obeying the dictates of the rules of piety, gradually succeeds in replacing evil action by good; that is, he translates selfish action into unselfish action, and does all the good to others that he can. The saint, on the other hand, follows his ideal of salvation. This means that he abandons, in its turn, even good action, and performs only those actions which are deifying and will help

him to bring his Godhood into manifestation. He then does neither good nor evil to anyone. He renounces the world and all the things thereof, utterly and completely, for good and all. His only concern as a saint, is for the future welfare of his soul, therefore his actions are only those calculated to free it from its bondage. In brief, his energy is directed solely towards the elimination of matter from his soul, to the exclusion of all else, good, bad, and indifferent.

We have it from Clement's own lips that the saint "must be above both good and bad, trampling the latter under foot, and passing on the former to those who need them." We remind ourselves once again of the fact that every outward act is the prelude to a material influx toward the soul. We can not but admit, then, that even the performance of deeds that in themselves are full of merit and virtue must also be accompanied by a material inflow. Certainly a virtuous action sets up less excitement and therefore the influx of material attracted to the divine substance is less difficult to get rid of. Nevertheless we cannot escape the fact that new material is attracted and that the soul's bondage is thus further prolonged. Every day we see around us that the good are just as much subjected to death as are the evil.

The distinction between virtue and vice seems to be only the same as that between a gilded chain and a heavier, iron one. They both serve to keep the soul enslaved. The first may be not altogether unpleasant; one may even be proud of it. The second may prove quite intolerable. We can see that this is so when we call to mind the fact that self-contemplation is the exercising of the natural functions of the soul. When the soul is engaged in this contemplation of itself there can be no suggestion of its imbibing anything from outside sources. When it is engaged therefore in this act there is no influx of matter. But any act committed outside this special activity of the soul causes an immediate inflow. It is from this fact that we must conclude that all action outside this special act, whether it be virtuous or otherwise, is the cause of spiritual bondage. We have it from Clement that the saints "are they who are restrained by law and fear. For on finding a favourable opportunity they defraud the law,

by giving what is good the slip." Which is to say that the saint rises above both good and evil action. He acts no longer in the world of men; only within the confines of the inner world of the soul. We thus see that the Christian idea that even virtuous action is to be repudiated is perfectly sound reasoning.

The advanced layman, ready and eager for the saintly path, and fully trained by now to qualify for it, takes farewell of the world cheerfully. He is perfectly content to leave it to its own devices, and rejoices to have escaped its snares and allurements at last. Linked with his renunciation of the world is the necessary breakaway from all family ties. There are no half-measures in this matter of salvation. As Christ says in St. Matthew's Gospel: "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." A stern ultimatum, commanding a resolute will to carry it out. But the saint knows that the giving up of the family follows as a natural result of leaving the world. He understands that it does not mean that he should literally "hate" his family. He is neither to hate nor love them. Caring as he does only for his soul's future he trains himself to become disinterested in them. The "strait" path to salvation does not even wait for the saint to bury those near to him, as the disciple discovered when he asked permission of Christ to bury his father before following him. We have it in St. Matthew's Gospel. "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." Leave the dead to their own kind, the spiritually dead. The saint knows full well that no man can serve two masters, that salvation calls for the utmost singleness of purpose. He hates the ties, the relationships, the entanglements which the family constitute, that seek to encompass him and keep him bound to the world of the flesh.

As a layman he fulfils his family obligations as faithfully as he can. He does his best to provide for his dependants against the time when he is ready to forsake them for his soul's sake. If they have sympathy and

21

understanding for his ideal they take leave of him cheerfully. They speed him on his way with a blessing, that in his new life he may have no lingering regrets in connection with them. If husband and wife are true partners, spiritually akin, and have progressed together, the wife even follows him into the "wilderness" if she has grown to entertain an equal regard for her soul.

Taking farewell of the world, then, leaving it without regret, the saint enters the arena for the last phase of his struggle for freedom. To uplift his heart and sustain his courage, he keeps ever before him Christ's promise to those who forsake all for the Ideal. "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. For the prize of everlasting life the saint is ready to sacrifice all of the material world that was formerly his.

On setting out he remembers the Scriptural injunction as recorded by St. Matthew. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purse, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat." He obeys it to the letter. He carries nothing with him, and becomes a wanderer, for ever homeless. He follows the example Christ set, and lives as St. Matthew tells us the Master lived. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not whereto lay his head." And so it is with the saint. He becomes dependent for his very subsistence on the charity of others. It should be realised that in no sense of the word is he a beggar. In his life as a layman he may have been king, prince, or millionaire. Right Faith, right Knowledge, come to any whatever his station, if he seeks diligently enough for them. And even a king can long for immortality and happiness. Strong in the teaching of Christ the saint bears complete poverty with equanimity and dispassion. He derives his strength from the teaching to be found in St. Matthew's Gospel. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink;

nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." With Christ he asks: "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

He takes no thought of where the next meal is to come from. He remembers Christ's words. "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns," and he knows that they are fed. At all times the saint eats very, very sparingly. He has lost all interest in food and eats only that body and soul may be kept together long enough for him to work off the remnants of matter still adhering to the fabric of his soul. To eat and drink once a day is sufficient for this purpose. He knows that to eat more frequently develops the craving for sensual enjoyment. His idea is not to die, if he can help it, before the task of freeing his soul is accomplished, for he is not anxious that these last remaining forces of matter should drag him into yet another body. But even on this point he remains calm and dispassionate. We cannot stop here to linger on this, but we shall certainly go deeper into it in the next chapter. The saint regards his stomach as a pit to be filled regardless of the quality of the material with which it is filled. The only stipulations he places on what he eats is that it should be pure food, and prepared in such a way that the principle of mercy, of universal love, is adhered to in as strict a manner as is possible. If he is not satisfied that the food offered him fulfils these conditions then he refuses it. He is prepared to go without food and drink for days together if nothing suitable is offered. Whatever straits he may be in he partakes of nothing of whose purity he is suspicious, or if the creed of mercy for all has not been kept sufficiently in mind.

Just as he is indifferent as to how his body is fed so is he as to how it is covered. He remembers Christ's question on this point, and his answer: "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Here Christ teaches that the lily has its covering given it by the all-wise mother, nature, and that there is none better clothed. In his usual mystic way he implies that the human being has also been

provided with his covering. Has he not his covering of parchment to keep together and hide from view the odd collection of bones and flesh, and such-like things that are his body?

The Teachers preach that the possession of clothes, like food and every other material thing, is a sin against the soul. Clement in his writings reports the opinion of 'Peter' on this subject. "Peter said: 'For we, who have chosen the future things, in so far as we possess more goods than these, whether they be clothings, or food or drink, or any other thing, possess sins because we ought not to have anything, as explained to you a little ago. To all of us possessions are sins . . . . The deprivation of these, in whatever way it may take place, is the removal of sins.'" Peter is right in what he says. If the soul is to concern itself with the procuring and guarding and repairing of such things as body coverings, of however simple a nature, then it is prevented from consistently exercising its function of self-contemplation. The Saint knows that one single possession is sufficient to take away the perfection of peace and harmony that he is striving so hard to create within himself.

When we understand the nature of desire even more clearly we soon see why the Christian Doctrine forbids even the mildest of desires, even for such things as food and covering. The impulses are the instruments through which desire expresses itself. It is true to say that they can be curbed one by one. But it would be very far from the truth to say that they can be destroyed one by one. They can only be destroyed all together, at one and the same time. The reason for this is simple. As we have seen, they are only so many phases or aspects of the will and they continue to exist so long as the will does. They arise from the feelings of attraction or love, and hatred or aversion, which are always experienced with reference to the bodily personality. We have also seen that the will itself is only the expression of the sentiment of self-regard and that desires are only so many different forms of the bodily appetites. If there were no bodily self to intervene there would be no formation or modification of impulses. Unless, therefore, the personal element is destroyed there can be no destruction of the impulses. This

regard for the body and the bodily self can revive and reinforce any and all kinds of desires even in the heart of so highly trained a man as the saint. When the saint does experience a fall from discipline it can be credited only to this insidious self-regard. When once desires are destroyed they cannot be revived. This serves to show that the saint must uproot from his heart all desires, including the one for food and bodily covering.

The saint, therefore, frees himself from all material possessions. The only things he allows himself are the sacred books, for study and inspiration. As soon as he finishes with them he gives them away to those who are glad to have them. The Teachers know only too well how difficult it is to strip one's self of all material goods, down to that last garment that covers the body's nakedness. Is it not easier, according to them, for the camel to go through the eye of the needle, than for the rich man to enter into the kingdom of God? But it is by such hard lessons of renunciation and self-denial that the saint learns how to discipline his body and to crush out for good the bedraggled weaklings of desire to which the strong weed that once flourished so lustily in his heart has been reduced. He learns, indeed, "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Judging from these words contained in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul seems to know all about the suffering that the saint willingly submits himself to on his path. Perhaps he tried it at some time or other in his life.

Having sketched from the material provided for us by the Scriptures something of the general outline of the saint's life we may now proceed to fill in some of the details. The saint, having chosen his path, regulates his conduct by the highest degree of self-control. To accomplish this end he does everything in his power to perfect himself in righteousness, mercy, renunciation, equanimity, and the other auspicious qualities essential to the freedom of the soul. The five vows he adopted as a layman he now observes with meticulous, unrelaxing care. As a saint he tries to avoid injuring even the one-sensed form of life. For the proper observation of his vow of mercy he is careful in his movements and in the handling of

things, so that the destruction of life in such small living beings as insects sullies the purity of his soul as little as possible. And not only does he not commit any act of injury himself; he does not ask anyone else to do it for him, nor in any way encourage its commission by word or deed. It is for this reason that he does not prepare or cook food for himself; nor pluck fruits or berries from trees or shrubs. In the beginning he is not in a position to refrain from taking suitable food offered him. But it is his aspiration some day to escape even from that much contamination of his soul.

With the same rigidity he observes his vow of truthfulness. Diplomatic speech, story-telling and the like which were permitted him as a householder, are taboo for him. Untruth includes a suppression of an actual fact as well as a suggestion of falsity. The saint aims at a much higher standard of truthfulness. He will not utter things which though they may be true, lead to injury to living beings. He does not speak in anger, in fear, in greed, without deliberation, for at these times he knows that there is a possibility of being tempted from the narrow path of strict truthfulness, and it is his aim never to depart from it.

The same unbending rigidity is observed in the other vows. In like manner the saint observes carefulness with regard to non-stealing. He includes in this vow such things as not even using books belonging to a fellow saint without first asking permission. Nor will he enter a house without the permission of the owner, even though he knows that his presence will be welcomed. As for the fourth vow, of celibacy, following the Biblical injunction he becomes absolutely celibate now. Christ knew, and approved of the adoption of complete celibacy very well. "And there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." The saint is a voluntary eunuch, that he may master the sexual passion completely. To strengthen him in his vow he does not look on the feminine form, does not eat highly-seasoned food, nor call to mind past pleasurable experiences of sexual gratification. With regard to the fifth vow, of renunciation, he has already given up at the entry-gate

of sainthood all those material "not-self" possessions which do not appertain to his soul. As a practising saint he sets himself to the task of casting off all the internal "possessions" of the not-self. The four passions, joking, sorrow, fear, disgust, zest, boredom—all such things are foreign to the soul's nature and are to be dispensed with. In adhering to this vow of renunciation the saint remains completely indifferent to the objects of the senses.

As the saint now adheres with all the power at his command to the five vows he took as a layman, so he obeys to the letter the ten rules of pious conduct. Forgiveness, humility, purity of mind, charity, all the other injunctions, the saint adheres to with the utmost exactness. Now indeed, as a saint, can he really love his enemies and bless them that curse him. As an advanced layman he obeyed the Biblical text that commands him to give his cloak also to him who would take his coat; and also to sell all that he had and give it away in charity. As a saint when he is smitten on the right cheek he turns the other also. And so with the other rules. As a saint he learns to carry them out to the full.

As we have already learnt from earlier investigation the ultimate aim of the saint is to divert the activity of attention from the outer physical world to the inner spiritual one. He seeks, in other words, to establish his soul in self-contemplation. All other activity on his part is subsidiary to this aim; simply adjuncts enlisted by him for the realisation of his main purpose in life. Obviously if he is to accomplish this task he must develop his powers of concentration to the fullest extent. Thus he seeks to conquer the unruly mind and body that left to their own devices only fritter away the vital energy.

Now concentration means the focussing of the forces of attention on one point and keeping them there. We remember that attention is the soul at tension in the form of a craving. What we have not yet made clear to ourselves is that it is associated with three things, the intellect or mind, the body, and speech. This means that the mind, body and speech form three channels through which attention is able to suck in matter. When therefore, the saint does battle against its activity and

endeavours to force it into withdrawing its interest from the outer to the inner world, to concentrate, in other words, on the spirit instead of the body, there are three "fronts" on which he must defend himself.

The saint knows that if the victory in the conflict with attention is to be his he must enlist in his support all the possible forces that he can command. It is for this reason that in addition to his five great vows he undertakes other observances necessary in his fight for life against the deceiving jade attention. The first is the cultivation of equanimous dispassion, which, as a layman still subject to the claims of ordinary worldly activity, he was little qualified to practise. The saint spends most of his time striving for this desirable attitude of mind—for at least three periods during the day, in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. The next two observances concern the adoration of Divinity, and meditation. They keep his mind fixed on the ideal for which he is ready to give his life. The fourth observance, which is necessary for saint and layman alike, is confession. Before the saint attains to that high degree of perfection to which he aspires he commits many faults of commission and omission. These he confesses to himself; that is he recognises and acknowledges them. If there is one higher and more trained in self-control than himself he confesses to him.

Confession is one of the sure means of self-improvement. The impulse to lay bare an evil action elevates the soul. Besides, when the evil act lies exposed before his own condemning eyes, and those perhaps of another, a man experiences shame, and this goes a long way towards preventing a repetition of the offence. The impulse, the impelling force that led him astray, is as we know none other than the excitement of his will. The fact that he regrets his act and confesses it proves that he is now better able to control its excitement. This means a loosening or total wiping out, according to the depth of feeling of disgust and shame for what he has done, of the stain left by the deed. As the Fathers note in the twenty-fourth volume of their writings: "Repentance, then, becomes capable of wiping out every sin." If the act committed is very bad, or if it is an evil habit to be uprooted, then penance is enlisted to carry on the

good work of confession and repentance. The strict disciplinary measure of paying a penalty for a fault committed loosens the stain altogether and lessens still further the possibility of a repetition. We thus see that confession and pénance, in conjunction with such practices as fasting and other austerities, can do much to eradicate evil propensities from the heart, to exorcise the "evil spirit," as Christ calls it. He himself says of it according to St. Matthew: "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

It will be noticed that this is the first time that we have been brought to a reference to prayer and we would do well to turn aside here for a few moments to consider it in this connection for it had to Christ a significance very different from that given it by popular opinion. Prayer is really nothing other than self-communion—the contemplation of one's own self—since according to Christian teaching man can only pray for the things of the spirit and not of the senses. What are we told when we would pray for wealth and prosperity? Ye cannot serve God and Mammon......Go sell off all ye possess, give it away in charity, and come and follow me....Lay not up treasures for yourself on earth. For family and home? If any one come after me and hate not his wife, and father, and mother, etc; etc; he is not worthy of me. Foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not whereto lay his head. For food? The workman is worthy of his meat........Follow the sparrows: they till not nor sow. For life and health? If any one come after me and hate not his life he cannot be my disciple.........He who shall save his life shall lose it. And so on with all the things that pertain to the body and its well-being.

It seems that the only thing that can be asked in prayer is: "Thy kingdom come," and this can only apply to the soul. It is the soul's kingdom which is to come—that kingdom of God commenting on which Tertullian explains: "It means in us, of course." Christ never taught any prayer until the disciples asked: "Lord!

teach us how to pray." He gave them the Lord's prayer, which is not a prayer at all, but a formula for meditation, as we can see on analysing it.

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come." In St. Luke's Gospel Christ teaches: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, lo here! or lo there, for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Now what is in us is simply Life which is divine, so that the phrase "thy kingdom come" implies a fervent longing on the part of the worshipper for Self-perfection. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Here is a longing for a different order of things on earth—"as it is in heaven." "Give us this day our daily bread." This betokens a request just for daily bread, signifying a disclaimer of any wealth and possessions the worshipper may possess. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." "Debts" is substituted for "sins," and repentance for sins committed is here implied. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen." Here is an expression of horror for future failings, coupled with a desire for deliverance from evil and an acknowledgement of the power and glory of the soul. What is this, if it is not meditation? But to return to the main theme The fifth weapon that the saint considers to be a necessity of his armoury is the cultivation of the sense of detachment from the body. In practising this he makes up his mind to disregard the body completely; its ease, its comfort, even its safety, all of which considerations seek to distract his attention. For this reason he does not run if he is attacked by wild animals; and remains indifferent to the vagaries of the weather. During the time he is cultivating this necessary frame of mind he endeavours to establish himself in the world of his spirit, seating himself happily and securely there, so that within his self, he becomes isolated from the world, and happen what may to his body he does not care. In this way he obtains a foretaste of the sweetness of the things to come—the glory and blissfulness of his soul nature that will one day manifest themselves for good, never again to be smothered.

The sixth observance enlisted to lend him aid is study—and for the same reasons that he studied as a layman; that his faith may become ever stronger and more perfect, bearing him, sustaining him, in his labour.

These observances then, together with the five vows, are some of the adjuncts with which the saint seeks to conquer the unruly body and mind, that they may leave him free to concentrate his powers on his soul. Practised with perseverance and ardour they lead to increased physical and mental stability. The Christian Teachers, for the usual reason of expediency, that they could not afford to be tco explicit, have not entered into close details as to how concentration is to be developed. That they realised the necessity for it, for single-minded purposeness, is however, plain to see from certain significant words of Christ to be found in St. Luke's Gospel. "The light of the body" he says, "is the eye; therefore when thy eye is evil thy body also is full of darkness." It is evident that to Christ's mind too, the evil eye of scattered attention, covering as it does a wide area without piercing deeply its gloom, should not be allowed to fritter away the light of the spirit, and that neither should the mind be permitted with its undisciplined restlessness to dissipate life.

Since the Christian Teachers are silent on the question of how concentrative energy is to be directed into proper channels it may well prove both instructive and valuable if we make some enquiry into the Yoga systems that have been employed in the East for thousands of years, with apparently a good deal of success, by those who wish to learn the difficult art of perfect concentration. The aim of the Yogi saint is the same as that of the Christian one; the separation of the soul from matter. Like the Christian Doctrine we have spent so much effort in trying to understand, Yoga insists that each man must see after his own salvation; that he alone can clear away the alien matter from his soul. Like Christianity Yoga understands the value of meditation and realises that for perfect meditation concentration is an essential. It is well-known that the Yogi is an adept at developing this power. His truly amazing powers in this direction have been demonstrated time and again, so that a study of his method is bound to be helpful to us.

Before we go into his method of developing concentration it would be as well to examine briefly the chief Yoga systems. The main branches are four. In common with the Christian Doctrine, they all have the same aim—to free the soul; but they each have their own idea as to how this is to be achieved. Hatha Yoga aims at producing the desired attitude of concentration by bringing the physical body under control. The mind is to be purified and uplifted by exercising restraint on the senses. Under this system the physical body is submitted to the utmost severities. Bhakti Yoga thinks that the desired end can be accomplished through love of the Divine. The follower of this method cultivates an all-embracing love for God. His belief is that love concentrates all the powers of the will effortlessly on to the object of love, the beloved. When a man falls in love with a woman he has no need to whip his attention into thinking of her ! Love has already concentrated it there. So the bhakta's intense, singleminded love for God constitutes his concentration. He claims that through this passionate love for the Divine he becomes merged in the beatific state of a divine vision in his own soul. The third method is Raja Yoga, the science of self-realisation through control of the mind. The last is Jnana Yoga. This claims to accomplish the desired end through knowledge; knowledge of the all-important questions regarding Life and the nature of things. With the proper sense of values that knowledge brings to the Jnani he comes to see clearly the essentially hollow nature of the objects of the senses. In this way, he says, he becomes deaf to the cravings of his senses. He is able to renounce them with ease and thus attains to perfect concentration.

The very fact that it has never been claimed for any devotee of Yoga that he has obtained release from the physical body or that he has even attained omniscience bears eloquent testimony of the failure of Yoga to realise its aim. The Yogi falls short of his aim for the simple reason that his method of salvaging the soul is unscientific. It is not always based on the iron laws of nature. He develops his will-power to a remarkable degree of perfection; to this point he is entirely scientific, as we shall see, following faithfully the natural laws. But,

with all his reserves of mental power ready at his command to concentrate all their energy wheresoever he chooses to direct it, he leaves the path of science when he fails to realise that it is on the soul itself that his energy is to be concentrated.

From the painstaking examination that we have conducted of our own Scriptures we see that each one of the aims of the four methods of Yoga are very necessary. Certainly, if the Christian teaching is to be relied upon, mind and body are to be brought under control. Certainly knowledge of the truth is to be acquired, and with all despatch. Certainly the God within is to be revered and worshipped. But concentrate on his own particular method as the Yogi may, not one of them of itself, alone, without any other aid, is capable of freeing the soul. Where is the good of cultivating mind or body if one has no knowledge of the why and wherefore of it all? Of what use is the subduing of one without the other? Of what use is knowledge if it is not put into practice? How is the love of the Divine, no matter how intense and impassioned, to break the chains that, although they are invisible to mortal eye, are nonetheless very real and substantial, powerful enough to keep the soul chained to the world of the flesh? As our own Teachers are at pains to tell us, knowledge and its proper use, physical and mental discipline, love for the soul, all must be utilised for freedom. But it must be a combination of them all, and in that scientific way that they themselves advocate; that doing of the right thing at the right moment.

The real reason why the Yogi fails to accomplish freedom lies in the fact that he has neglected to acquaint himself with the seven essentials of scientific knowledge. He has failed to understand the nature of spirit and matter; their relationship; how matter is attracted to the soul; how it is woven into the soul's very substance; how it is to be got rid of. Consequently his efforts to release himself from bondage are doomed to failure, praiseworthy though they may be in many aspects and worthy of imitation up to a certain point.

Now that we have put ourselves on our guard against this defect of Yoga we may look into that department—

the development of perfect concentration—where they are acknowledged masters of their art. The Christian saint, lacking explicit directions from his own Scriptures as to how he is to master his will-power that he may direct it where he will, may well learn from the Yogi on this point. Let us, then, explore further the little-known, to the European at any rate, territory of Yoga, to take stock of the methods practised by its devotee to this end.

We see first of all that the Yogi attaches a good deal of importance to the question of bodily posture during meditation and contemplation. He believes that these forms of concentration cannot be indulged in to any extent if the body is not trained to remain quiescent under all conditions, favourable or otherwise. He realises that if its restlessness is allowed to remain unchecked the mind is distracted and the energy of the will dissipated. At the same time he realises that ease of posture is also to be considered when prolonged concentration is aimed at. If he is to remain in one position for long periods then the body should be as comfortable as possible. The Yogi, therefore, in choosing a posture for concentration bears in mind the fact that it must be one where the smallest amount of tension is produced in his system and where at the same time the spirit of austerity is not sacrificed for love of bodily ease. It is no good if the body is too comfortable. Drowsiness is evoked and the mind loses its keenness and clarity of thought in somnolence. For these reasons the Yogi, from time immemorial, has selected that position where he sits on the ground, with legs crossed so that the right foot rests on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. He fixes his gaze steadily on one of the bodily centres, such as the nose or heart, and is careful to hold neck and chest in line with each other, so that the spine is kept rod-like.

The Yogi contends that when man cultivates the habit of concentration to the fullest extent many subtle changes take place, both mentally and physically, and in particular in the nerves. He claims that the process of severe physical and mental drilling that he undergoes results, if pursued in a scientific manner, in the closing up of the old, deeply-rooted tracks in the nervous matter

of the brain and the spinal column, and the opening up of new paths. He asserts that nerve currents are replaced and given a new channel. That, as the spirit gains ascendancy over the flesh, new kinds of vibrations are set up. That, in fact, the whole constitution is remodelled. He teaches that the main line of action lies along the spinal column. That it is for this reason that the Yogi sits erect; that the spine may be held free, in a straight line. Certainly it has been commonly observed that the body of the advanced, highly trained Yogi undergoes outward changes visible to the most casual eye. It acquires an indefinable air of purity and spirituality. The face becomes calm and shining, the features refined and delicate, the voice musical and sweet. As the soul-power develops and the spirit slowly gains ascendancy over the flesh, as the soul gains in "self-possession" and its innate peace and tranquillity is allowed to prevail, the physical body is bound to reflect the internal change.

It is no longer denied by modern thinkers that there are certain centres in the human organism which have their own specific functions. It is recognised that man's faculties and powers are due to the development of these centres and his shortcomings can be traced to the undeveloped or atrophied state of one or more of them. Professor James says: "Injury of the motor regions in the head, for instance, causes what is known as aphemia or motor aphasia, which is not the loss of voice nor paralysis of the tongue or lips, but the inability to utter any words at all, or the utterance of a few meaningless stock phrases as speech, mispronouncing, mis-placing, and misusing one's words in various degrees."

The Yogi, once he has brought his powers of concentration into full play, can develop any or all of these centres at will, by rearranging under the force of concentration the nervous matter and stimulating it into activity. But beyond giving the general outline—bodily posture, rhythmic breathing, and such-like elementary practices—he does not divulge the secret of practical Yoga to all and sundry. They are held in reserve for the capable, deserving men already, through their own efforts, well-established on the path of austerity and soul-culture.

Yoga accepts as disciple only him who has already conquered slothfulness with zeal and earnestness; who is already well-established in the excellent habits of discrimination, non-attachment, renunciation and faith. It would seem that we may take it that the principle of Yoga consists in the accomplishment of systematic relaxations of bodily tensions that obstruct the free-functioning of certain powerful nervous currents, such as that which is said to reside in the basic plexus. There will be more to say about this subject later. For the moment we must return to the Yogi's preliminary steps for the conservation of the powers of the will.

The Yogi asserts that if proper conduct has been regularly observed and some initial training already undergone, the aspirant soon acquires ease of posture and that this done he can retain his seat for as long as he pleases. When the posture has become firm and easy and is no longer a source of distraction to the mind he then recommends the practising of what he calls pranayama. The word is generally taken to mean the regulation of breath, although it really signifies the controlling of the life-energy. According to the Yogi, the primary object of pranayama is to control the wandering of the mind so that futile and wasteful dissipation of energy is eliminated. Prana is the electricity, or vital force, contained in the atmosphere. Breathing is the main source through which man absorbs this vital energy. With every breath taken a certain amount of prana is inhaled from the atmosphere. This electricity is absorbed by the blood and stored in the nervous system. The Yogi, by regulating his breathing, aims at controlling this vital force for his own use, at his own will. Ordinarily, breathing is an involuntary act, except when it is brought under partial control as in speaking and singing, etc. As a matter of fact respiration is under the control of a part of the cerebro-spinal axis known as the medulla oblongata. The Yogi, by the scientific regulation of the respiratory action is thus enabled to establish control over the vital forces of his body. According to him the proper method of breathing is neither exclusively clavicular, nor thoracic, nor diaphragmatic. It is a combination of them all. His object is to remove the condition of passivity from his system. He accomplishes this by means of pranayama.

Pranayama consists of three steps; inhalation, retention, exhalation. The Yogi inhales a large quantity of the vital breath. He holds it in the stomach, in the region of the navel, and then exhales it, slowly and evenly. The Yogi saint who is well-versed in his art can energise the nervous centres of the spinal column and brain which control the whole nervous system.

The Yogi teaches that the lung capacity increases with practice but that it also requires other aids. Like the Christian Teachers, he insists on food that is pure and wholesome, and non-irritating, so that the body acquires lightness and elasticity. Likewise he insists upon the giving up of smoking and drinking, together with animal food, for he recognises that they produce the very conditions it is the aim of Yoga to remove. In addition, he advocates the practising of certain purificatory breathing exercises which will make the nerves supple and light. He then says that after a few months sufficient control is acquired to "will" the prana to any particular part of the body. By these means he claims that he can gain control over his body; even to the extent of ridding his system of many kinds of diseases.

It seems, on examining Yoga still more closely, that in rhythmic breathing pranayama has a powerful ally with which to gain control over the vital forces of the body. The Yogi believes that rhythm pervades the universe. Certainly the power of rhythm is demonstrated when we realise that it is possible for a regiment of soldiers to bring down a bridge if the order to "break step" is not given. The Yogi believes that there is a certain rhythm in all vibrations. That all cosmical movements and all manifestations of force are rhythmic; and that therefore the human body, too, is just as much subject to the law of rhythm. It is the Yogi's belief that the heart-beat is the basis of the rhythm of the body, and he catches the "swing" of his body-rhythm from his pulse. With his finger on it he counts 1,2,3,4; 1,2,3,4; until the rhythm is firmly fixed in his mind. He then begins to breathe in rhythm with it. He breathes in for the space of four heart-beats, retains it for four, and then slowly breathes out for eight. As

the aspirant becomes more adept he is recommended to extend the duration of the retention of breath. According to Yoga the effect of breathing in this manner is that every fibre of the body is set vibrating until the whole body tingles with vitality. When all the bodily motions become rhythmic the body is galvanised into an irresistible "battery" of will.

Thus we have seen something of the method by which the Yogi seeks to strengthen his powers of concentration. But, says the Yogi, these physical measures are useful only to a certain stage. Again in unconscious agreement with the Christian Teachers, he emphasises the fact that renunciation and meditation are the true means whereby the will is developed. Pranayama and rhythmic breathing, if pursued after that stage is reached, constitute in themselves a distraction to the concentration of the mind on the desired object. It is for this reason that the advanced saint does not concern himself with the regulation of the breath.

When sufficient proficiency is acquired in the practising of pranayama the Yogi then recommends the novice to practise putting a check on the outgoing energy of the mind and freeing it from the senses. What he advocates is the holding of the mind on a certain point, to the exclusion of all else. There are ten places in the body for mental concentration—the eyes, the ears, the tip of the nose, the top of the head, mouth, navel, heart, palate, the upper part of the forehead and between the two eyebrows. When this is successfully accomplished then meditation on such things as the Scripture, its teaching, the seven essentials of knowledge, can be introduced. And when once the object of meditation is established in the mind the goal is reached. Concentration becomes steady and may be continued undisturbed for any length of time. Some kind of meditation is, I suppose, implied in every form of thought-activity, including that of the ordinary man. But while the trained saint is master of his mind, body and senses, and can remain absorbed in meditation for as long as he pleases, the ordinary man never has at his command anything more than a wavering, flickering current of thought.

We have now seen something of the system by which Yoga trains its followers in the art of concentration and self-mastery. Before we pass on to the consideration of how the saint progresses when once he has achieved this object it will be of further interest to us to linger awhile with the Yogi, for I think we may benefit from a closer examination of the effects of this special form of soul culture.

We should first of all make clear to ourselves why it is that the Yogi attaches so much importance to the nerves, and their currents and channels, and such things. Why is he so keen to gain control over them? We begin to realise something of their vital importance when we remind ourselves of the fact that the soul is held a tight prisoner in the body and that it is the complex nervous system that so ably sets the seal to this close and binding union. That the soul does fill the whole body is certain. It cannot be located in one centre only for then it would not be able to feel pain, e g. that of burning at the seat of injury, but only where it was seated. It is not fire that travels along the nerves from the seat of injury to some supposed central dwelling-place of the soul. If it were it would burn up the whole of the nervous tract en route. Let us make an analogy. If, while I am in Paris, I hear that my house in London is burning, it is the message that travels along my nerves to my consciousness and not the sensation of burning. It causes me distress, but I do not feel the pain of burning. If the soul were located only in one particular centre and one of the bodily limbs were to get burned, the sensation of burning would be confined to the place where the soul was seated and would not be experienced at the seat of affection, as actually happens. Since it is the soul and not the body that feels it is clear that the soul fills the whole body and feels its affections all over it; that is, locally, on the spot. This is recognised by some modern philosophers such as Maher. It seems also to have been recognised by the Fathers for we find Tertullian quoting the earlier Greek philosophers that this is indeed so, and apparently he is quite in agreement with them. He writes: "These philosophers maintain the unity of the soul as diffused over the entire body and yet in every part the same."

The nervous system, consisting as it does of sensory and motor nerves has its ramifications spread all over the body. The nerves unite in various places to form a network, a sort of cross-roads or road-junction, or in scientific language, a plexus. These nervous centres are highly sensitive, for the reason that here matter is attenuated, less dense than anywhere else in the body. These form some of the "body centres" such as the heart, the navel, etc; that the Yogi recommends as points on which to centre the powers of concentration. He too, is aware of the fact that at these conjunctions of nerves the soul is less buried under matter and therefore more accessible. These centres, then, formed as they are of important nerve junctions, constitute the vital connections between soul and body and being inter-connecting they comprise the central system through which the soul functions. It is in one of these centres that the soul has its "head-quarters." That centre which we may call the central organ of the mind. Clearly the soul must have a central office of some kind. If there were no *common* sense, that is something that was common to all the senses and faculties, hopeless confusion and serious delays in the working of the organism would be the usual occurrence. If the organ of thought were not connected with the senses, which is to say that if the senses were not controlled from one central spot of the organism, great gaps in thinking would be the result. Attention would be forced to wander from one sense organ to another in search of sensory data for its thought-activity. It would lose itself each time it entered a sense-centre and coordination of thought and action would be quite impossible.

Somewhere in the body, then, there is a central office, an organ of the mind where the coordination of all the phases of the individual's activity, sensory and motor, is effected, where time is economised, and confusion is eliminated from deliberation. The soul is like an engineer in that it must have all its connecting and controlling levers in one place, under its hand as it were. And if any of the various departments of the organism are not represented in this central organ of the mind the result is a gap that is a calamity to the individual.

We may well ask then, where is this central office? The brain is by no means the seat of passions and emotions. It cannot, then, be in the head. It is a matter of common knowledge that no other organ is more affected by the disturbances of passions and emotions than the heart. For this reason there is no other centre better fitted to be the soul's head-quarters. It is not contained in the physical organ itself. It lies in the spinal column, that well-protected stronghold of all the main nerves; in that part of the spine that lies in the region of the heart. Though not actually part and parcel of the heart the latter both affects and is affected by the conditions prevailing in the central organ of the mind.

This nervous centre of the mind is not the soul and therefore is not conscious by nature. It is an appendage; a tool, made of subtle matter, for the soul's use. Tertullian says that "the mind is nothing else than an apparatus or instrument of the soul." It is composed of the two kinds of nerves, sensory and motor. They are arranged in it like the levers of an operating-board, and there are eight such boards in all. One for each of the five senses; one for linking up perceptions with the words which are their symbols in speech, and for the significance of symbols in general; one for creative thought and the association of ideas; one for voluntary motion and speech. Associations are formed in the course of experience; proficiency in their use is acquired by practice.

In this central organ of the mind all the nerve filaments connect up through the brain with every part of the body and the entire nervous system is here brought under control. Here both sensory and motor nerves have their terminals. Here through their connection with the brain, the sensory nerves bring in intelligence of the outside world *via* the senses; here connection with it is maintained. Here also the motor nerves carry out the commands of the soul through manifold bodily movements. Thus it is from here that the wishes of the soul are enforced, which it initiates, at will, through the operating-board of motor mechanisms. In other words this central organ is also the seat of the will. Here too, in this eight-fold operating-board of the mind is the basis

of recollection, or memory. The difference between perception and recollection lies in the fact that in the one the sensory stimulus that calls forth the corresponding idea or state of consciousness from the mind comes from the outer world; in the other from within. The will, through the keyboard of the sensory groups, is able to produce just the same kind of stimulus as that which comes from outside, and consciousness responds to it in exactly the same manner as it does in actual perception. This is why recollections can be just as vivid, as fresh, as perceptions; and the fact that memory furnishes data for thought-activity with extreme rapidity lends further testimony to the fact that it is located in the deliberative mind itself and not at a distance.

This central organ of the mind is, then, a system of key-boards, as it were, for the soul through its agent the will, to operate on. As such it is the soul's head office. It is here, where the covering of matter is more attenuated than in an any of the senses, that the soul, when it enlists the aid of concentration and meditation, is able to subdue to a certain measure its cravings, and then assumes the aspect of Reason. Here, through exercising still greater control of its faculties of concentration, the soul destroys its prejudices and reduces its passions to a milder intensity and is transformed into Self-consciousness. Here, when at last concentration is perfected, and all desires for external pleasures are completely eradicated from its heart (not its head, note), it becomes Omniscient. And when this state of perfection is reached, the death-knell of will is sounded. The will—the soul in an agitated condition, remember—the creature of desire, is destroyed once and for ever. With desire destroyed will ceases to function; for it can exist only so long as desire does.

Having discovered so much about the nervous system, and seen how its network of nerves is spread all over the body, we need no longer wonder why the Yogi is so eager in his efforts to gain control over this elaborate and ingenious system. Although he is unaware of the only really scientific Yoga that can free the soul from its bondage, he is psychologist enough to have discovered the importance of the nerves to the well-being of man.

We too, are now able to understand something of the enormous spiritual progress that can be made by the highly-trained man who alone possesses the necessary power of will to complete control of the nervous system. Let us now take a look at the other side of the picture, and see what benefits the body itself derives from this spiritual training. Since body and soul are so closely interwoven it is certain that if changes are taking place in the one, the other cannot but also be affected. It will be seen that not only is the fixing of attention on the nerve centres useful in concentrating the soul on itself, but that it has also been found helpful in ridding the body of pain and disease. The soul-force trained in all its fullness on a nerve centre, has the power of accomplishing the relaxation of any bodily tension that may be obstructing the free-functioning of the all-important nervous currents.

To see how the body is affected by spiritual power let us consider afresh the working-partnership of soul and body. The relationship can be likened to that of a spring to the field surrounding it which it irrigates. The physical beginning of the human organism is the fertilized ovum, a single cell formed in the body of the female parent and fecundated by the spermatozoon in the father's seed. The result of the fusion of their nuclei is the formation of a complete cell. It is at this point that the life-force—the soul—enters the cell and immediately sets out on the path of embryonic growth. The formation of the organism begins with this single cell forming its centre. From this primitive "parent" new cells are formed by the process of successive division, and come to occupy their proper places. This continues until the organism grows into a colony of cells, with the centres of control that have already been pointed out to us to regulate their functions and movements. As new cells are formed, both during the process of growth and afterwards when new cells are needed to replace those worn out in the course of the wear and tear of living, and take up their proper positions, life, the nervo-vital fluid, flows out from the centre *via* the nerves, covering them up and thus bringing them under control.

To come to the question of health. It is easy to see that as long as this central spring overflows with the fluid of life, and as long as its life-giving waters reach the vital organs through their conductors, the nerves, health is maintained. When, for various reasons which we shall see shortly, obstacles arise to prevent the waters from reaching all the bodily cells, those that receive no supply, or an insufficient quantity, are unable to contribute their share to the general well-being. In this way disease and other forms of unhealthy complications soon get their foothold in the organism. Now we want to see how this nervo-vital fluid is prevented from flowing freely all over the body, as it should.

To see how this can happen let us go to the spinal column, that important part of the human structure that is also the home of the main group of nerves, the cerebro-spinal. One of the functions of the spine is to shelter and protect the dozens of nerves which form the main system and have connections with every other part of the nervous system. Let us examine the spinal column in greater detail. The vertebrae that form the flexible column known as the spine are a series of small bones placed one above the other. Between most of these bones are pads of cartilage, which serve as cushions. They take the weight of the body and act as shock-absorbers when the thousand and one movements of daily life are made. Attached to each bone are the muscles that help to keep the structure erect and allow of flexibility of the spine, without which no movements either forward, backward or sideways, could be made.

The nerves that are attached to the spinal chord pass out, on their journey to those parts of the body which they serve, through small openings in the spinal column. Now, faulty posture, caused through such things as fatigue or too much sitting, from which most of us suffer in this age of sedentary living, can cause a flattening of the cartilages that separate the vertebrae, with the result that either they or the muscles press on the delicate nerves. The serious effect of such pressure can be gauged at once. The supply of nervo-vital fluid flowing through the nerves is shut off from those parts of the body normally fed by the affected nerves. Since the nerves are inter-connecting

this nerve restriction does not merely have a local effect in the spine alone. If a hold-up occurs anywhere then every organ in the body is affected. The contraction, through pressure, of the spine, which serves to keep all the organs in their proper places, throws the whole organism out of gear. The general efficiency and well-being of the individual as a whole is immediately impaired. Growth is restricted, the chest-walls tend to cave in, breathing consequently becomes shallow, and the circulation of the blood becomes sluggish, owing to the loss of vitality through starvation. The muscular structure that acts as a corset in protecting the abdominal organs and keeping them in position, is connected through the nerves with the spine and it too is affected by any constriction of the spinal nerves. The whole digestive apparatus of assimilation and elimination is thrown out of its proper position with the result that it is unable to function as it should. In addition the brain-cells also are starved so that even the mental vigour of the individual is affected. From all this we see how the nerves that are compressed in one part of the body have an astonishingly widespread effect on the entire organism.

Although we in the West have only just begun to realise all this, the Yogi discovered it all long ago. And his remedy? No expensive apparatus; no elaborate system of exercises. Simply soul-force; the concentration of his energy on the spine, to the exclusion of any other mental or physical activity. This concentration of the entire resources of the organism's energy on one centre proves irresistible. All tension is relaxed. The spine becomes flexible; and the more flexible it becomes the more resilient become the cartilages. With the resulting "elongation" of the spine the natural structural balance is restored and the different parts of the body are drawn back into their correct positions As the cartilages regain their natural resilience the pressure on the nerves is relaxed. The vital fluid is released. All obstacles are swept out of the way. Once more its life-giving waters are carried to every outpost of the body. At their healing touch the bodily organs, now in their proper places, are restored to their native vigour. Properly fed by the freed and relaxed

nerves they carry out their function as they were meant to, with the result that disease and disorder disappear. The brain-cells too are revivified by the living waters so that mental torpor also is banished, and the brain's natural vigour restored.

We see, then, that relaxation of the spine leads to general physical and mental well-being. Naturally the Yogi does not confine his relaxations to the spine alone. When he experiences anywhere in the body pain caused through the inflammation or congestion of nerves he at once sets to work to banish it by systematic relaxation of the nervous centre involved; obviously the one nearest the seat of the affection. As we saw, the Yogi also brings his concentrative powers to bear on other centres besides the nervous ones—the eyes, the mouth, the nose and the forehead, for instance. He has found from experience, I suppose, that these centres too, are easily relaxed; and that the nerves and muscles involved can be replenished with energy by means of relaxing them. Any one of us can, of course, practise these Yoga relaxations for himself. I have for months been experimenting with them and the results are undoubtedly quite striking.

During my study of the relaxations of the bodily centres I have been able to discover for myself which nervous centres cover which parts of the body and I append here, in the following chart, the result of my experiments, which may be of assistance to those who may be interested enough in Yoga to think of trying out some of its practices for themselves.

Practical Yoga Concentration.

Numbers	Points of concentration	Bodily parts affected	Remarks
1	Pelvic Plexus	Generative organs, intestines, principally, chest, thighs kidneys; liver, feet, secondarily.	Relaxation of the legs, feet and toes. The general release of enlivening energy
2	Basic Plexus	Much movement all along the spine. Sexual organs.	Relaxation of the lower part of the back, and in the head.
3	Cardiac Plexus	Stomach and abdomen principally. Chest, spine, shoulders, secondarily.	Tremendous pull exerted on the stomach and intestines. Useful for intestines and whole of the digestive track.
4	Solar Plexus	Contraction in the head, and in the sex organs.	A big pull in the chest.
5	Navel Plexus	Sex organs, chest, hips, legs.	Stomach and intestines, powerful pull on temples and upper part of spine.
6	Thoracic Plexus	Neck, shoulders, chest,	Effect felt on front part of face, behind nose and forehead.
7	The mouth	Shoulders, chest, stomach.	Movement behind the eyes.
8	The forepart of the nose	Lower part of chest, stomach.	Soothing to the eyes and head. Relieves tightness across the forehead.
9	The eyes	Chest, stomach.	Relaxation of eyeballs. Forepart of the head. Refreshing effect in general.
10	The upper part of the nose	Lungs, air passages, ribs, thorax. Stomach, secondarily.	Expands the ribs, clears the air passages, relaxation of the eyes and tight feeling in forehead.
11	The top of the thighs	Legs, sex organs, intestines. Kidneys, liver, hips.	Relaxation of toes.
12	The anus	Intestines, lower part of the chest, hips.	

Once the art of relaxing these centres is acquired, results are soon perceived, but he who has never practised it before should not be too impatient if it does not come at once. It takes some time for the will to become powerful enough to make the body respond to it. If it is tried two or three times a day for about five minutes at a time it will come in a week or two. Until it does come easily and at once, it is very helpful if the tips of the fingers are drawn very lightly backwards and forwards over the centre at which relaxation is desired. The path of the fingers should be followed with the mind; the thoughts should not be allowed to wander from it. By these means concentration is helped. It is also very necessary that the whole body should be thoroughly relaxed. Before concentrating the attention the body should feel as heavy as lead—which means that it is properly relaxed. Before long an increased flow of energy is felt surging up through the body; the muscles and nerves all over the body begin to contract, especially those most intimately connected with the centre where concentration is being exerted. It is the most energetic form of exercise I know. Practised on a cold day the body is soon warmed by the freed and increased circulation of the blood. When once the contraction begins the exercise should not continue for more than three or four minutes at a time, or for more than two or three times a day, as it can prove very tiring.

Since I have been practising these relaxations I have found that I can cure myself very quickly, sometimes immediately, of all sorts of minor aches and pains. Concentrating on the forehead, for instance, thereby relaxing the nerves and muscles of the head and replenishing the energy there, banishes any head-ache. In the same way, by concentrating on the eyes, eye-strain is abolished. At one time I used to suffer very much from gum-boils. Now whenever I feel the warning pain that one is coming I concentrate on the spot for two or three minutes. I do this a few times throughout the day and it disappears without any more fuss. Backache soon goes by concentration on that part of the spine nearest it. And so on with the many minor pains that can be a source of irritation, and detract from the general feeling of fitness and well-being.

Relaxation of the upper part of the nose has led me to wonder whether such relaxation would not be very helpful in cases of tuberculosis of the lungs. It is well-known that in this disease abundant supplies of oxygen are very necessary for the destruction of the tubercle bacillus. When relaxation of the upper part of the nose is practised it is found that the principal organs affected are the air-passages, the thorax, the lungs, and in addition the ribs. These latter are greatly expanded, and the air-passages are cleared of obstructions; all of which lead to greater intake of oxygen, which would surely mean benefit to sufferers of tuberculosis. I do not know from personal observation the precise effect of Yoga on serious diseases, but when suffering from a very severe attack of arthritis I found that although I did not cure, I was certainly able to alleviate the severe pain. But it should be possible to cure, if only the soul-force is properly liberated. I am only a beginner, on the layman's path, untrained, undeveloped; my spiritual power is still lying buried under masses of matter, through which it must struggle before its influence can be felt. The tranquillity, the serenity of the soul in which lies its strength, is continually, in the case of the untrained, being upset by desire in its various guises of worry, anxiety, wants and longings for this, that and the other. How can the soul-power thus vitiated be expected to work the wonders that it undoubtedly can? It is certain that the free, undisturbed, unrestricted soul can work wonders that to our ignorant eyes are miracles.

The truth is that although the Hindu Yogas are useful, with their physical training and subjection of the body, it is only the scientific Yoga of the soul that can sweep away every disease, of soul and body alike. Banish desire from the soul, free it from disturbance, establish it in meditation and contemplation—live in that inner kingdom of heaven—and nothing evil, either of body or spirit, can enter. What we regard as miracles are only the ordinary manifestations of the saint steeped in the Yoga of the soul. In reality everything is natural. It is ignorance that gives rise to the super-natural. When the causes of an effect are hidden, or unknown, it is considered a miracle. Let them once be known and it is seen that it is

a natural occurrence. When we come to think of it, surely the faculty of understanding that enables us to acquire mastery over nature is a miracle. And is not life itself the greatest of miracles? Nature abounds in wonders. Consider the mystery of magnetism. Is it not true that it is only this force of attraction that holds the universe, composed of millions and millions of tons of earth and rock and other solid matter, suspended in Space?

Why should we marvel at, or be sceptical of, the powers of the soul that has well-nigh accomplished its task of freeing itself from the strangle-hold of its body? Its power, too, is enacted through the force of its magnetism. Let us consider the matter for a moment. What is magnetism after all but a change in the arrangement of the particles of a substance? When a steel bar is magnetised it exhibits certain properties that were not active before; yet nothing is added to, or subtracted from, it. According to a scientific theory of magnetism "the difference between the arrangement of the particles in a magnet and an ordinary piece of steel, or iron, might be likened to the difference in the packing arrangements of two boxes of eggs— in the first (corresponding to the magnet) the eggs are carefully packed, lying side by side, parallel to each other and to the sides of the box, with their small ends all turned in the same direction, and therefore touching the larger ends of the adjoining eggs, while in the second (ordinary iron or steel), badly packed, the separate eggs lie in all sorts of positions with regard to each other, and at all angles of inclination to the sides of the box."

There are two explanations with regard to magnetism. One is that every particle of iron in an unmagnetised bar contains equal quantities of two magnetic fluids, positive and negative. They have a mutual attraction for each other, but are so closely united in the particle that they cancel each other out. The second theory is that the particles of iron are always magnetic, that the extremities of every particle are always magnetic poles, but that in the ordinary state of iron these poles are turned in all directions so that each neutralises the effect of the others. On the first hypothesis

magnetisation is brought about by the separation of the two fluids and their being pushed to the two poles. According to the second it is the effect of a re-arrangement of the particles that compose the bar, like the systematic arrangement of the eggs in the box.

Whichever theory is correct it is clear that the phenomenal power of the magnet is the result of a systematic arrangement of the parts composing it, "with regard to each other," and "the sides of the box." This is the change that takes place in the human will under the influence of self-contemplation; the concentration of the self on the self. In the unenlightened state the power of the will is neutralised because of the bad arrangement of the magnetic units or particles. But once let it be brought under the influence of a living active faith in the divinity of the Self and then see the result. The units are brought into proper, that is magnetic, arrangement; and a living magnet of tremendous power is created. How is this accomplished? It is yet another victory for the powers of concentration. It is the act of one-pointed concentration that forces these will-units to rearrange themselves on magnetic lines.

In its natural purity Life is an immense magnet with all its constituents arranged in the proper way. When man is able to arrange his mind on the magnetic principle he brings himself into harmony with Life. The Life that is in him pulsates in harmony with the Self and he may now claim the full benefit of the entire magnet. The ordinary mortal is like one of the particles of the unmagnetised bar. He runs counter to the lines of magnetic force. And see what happens to him. A mere drop in the ocean of Life so far as the body is concerned, he tries to swim against the current. All he receives is knocks and kicks and bludgeonings; suffering and unhappiness. Ignorance and desire are the causes of his miserable condition. Ignorance deprives him of the knowledge of the Self. Desire lures him into turning round against the current, in pursuit of tempting objects that do not lie in the straight course. Herein lies man's folly. So long as he swims with the current the ocean

of Life bears and supports him. Let him reverse his direction, and with the current against him, he is destroyed.

All the ills of mind and body result from the blind endeavour to swim against the current of Life. The human system is made up of polarised cells; the mind, or rather the will in the central organ of the mind, is the steel bar in which, in man's present condition, the particles have been so badly arranged—disarranged would perhaps be the better word—that the psycho-magnetic fluid in one is neutralised by that of the opposite kind in another. Let these mind-particles be rearranged, let the positive poles of all the cells of the "mind-stuff" point in the same direction, let that direction point to Life, and there is no limit to man's power and happiness. In this, surely, lies the secret of health and power, both physical and spiritual.

Before we leave the subject of Yoga perhaps a word of warning is indicated. These Yoga practices, involving as they do many important changes in the arrangement of brain cells and nerve currents, should be proceeded with with due caution. Unless the subject is thoroughly understood and mastered, or is practised under the guidance of a teacher harm may result. Any error in some apparently trifling detail, such as a little misapprehension of the natural ease of posture, or a slight overdoing of an exercise, might have unfortunate consequences. It is well-known that straining of every kind is always to be avoided in all ascetic austerities, and the Yogi warns us that this is the case with regard to the Yoga training. To me it seems that the chief ingredient of true Yoga is the acquisition of an unshakable conviction in the truth of the soul being a God in itself, infinitely powerful in its divinity. Once that is acquired everything else will fall naturally into place.

And now, having been led astray by our study of concentration into the fascinating highways and byways of Yoga it is time that we returned to our saint, whom we left doing his best to develop to the full his powers of concentration. As the saint comes nearer to perfect concentration so he comes nearer to perfect meditation

undistracted by anything. As we know his only concern is for the salvation of his soul, so that his meditation is concerned only with those things that help him to this end. With the aid of the proper books and text he dwells on the means of destroying the body; he reflects on the effect of action on the soul, the nature of the universe and the conditions of life prevailing therein; on the sense of the impermanency of things; all of which fill his mind with a spirit of renunciation and a love for the Immortal Soul. Gradually he attains to perfect concentration; a spirit of absolute renunciation is well and truly engendered within him. He is now ready for Self-contemplation, the highest and purest form of meditation, which is the actual means of redeeming the soul.

It is worth while to see how certain of the Hindu Yoga enthusiasts fall into an error of judgment when they teach that concentration can be acquired solely by fixing the attention on certain objects. This amounts to nothing but sheer torture, and moreover, fails in its object. There is only one way to perfect concentration and that is the way of desirelessness. When nothing in the world has the power to tempt attention away from its inner kingdom, then alone can concentration be said to be perfect. There will then be no need to force attention inwards. It will be only too happy to rest content there of its own accord, and Self-contemplation will be an easy matter then.

What actually is Self-contemplation? Perhaps we might ask first, what is contemplation? I look at a beautiful scene. I examine its salient features; the sea, the sky, the mountains, the light and shadow playing on them, the colours, and all the other things in connection with it. I meditate on them, individually and as a whole, and in their relation one to the other. So I study it; until I am lost in its beauty. Until, in fact, I am lost in contemplation of it. In short, I realise it. This is what contemplation is—realisation. Thus it is with the soul. Self-contemplation—contemplation by the soul of itself as the soul—is Self-realisation—realisation of the Self as the soul. As I, through meditating on the scene, lost myself in con-

templation of it, so the saint with his vows, his special observances, his cultivated indifference to bodily discomfort, his concentration, his meditation, is finally "lost," merged, in contemplation of the beauties of his soul with its everlasting life, its bliss, its omniscience, its infinite power, and its countless other divine graces. "Lost" in contemplation of his soul, he has achieved his object. He has entered the life of the spirit—the kingdom of Heaven.

The effect of Self-contemplation is the release of the soul from matter. We know that when, through the influence of cravings and desires, matter enters into the feeling-tone of the organism it sticks there. Mere close proximity of matter does not affect the soul, as we saw in the case of the peppermint in the mouth. This means that under the influence of the soul's agitations and cravings matter acquires a kind of gluey stickiness. Self-contemplation rids the soul completely of all forms of agitation and craving, so that the inflowing matter which acquires adhesiveness because of them now loses its stickiness and perforce falls off. Self-contemplation is therefore the immediate cause of the redemption of the soul. The Bible itself says: ' Blessed are the peaceful, for they shall see God." When the soul is pure, and all agitation is quelled, it sees itself as God.

To go into further details. There are three ways in which the process of Self-contemplation can be carried out. In one the individual thinks of the divinity of his own soul by means of speech or words. Self-contemplation by these means takes the form of adoring his own divinity in words. "I am immortal, I am divine;" and so on. In another, he thinks of his divinity by means of images or pictures. This is wordless. Attention is fixed all the time that it lasts on the form and image of divinity as his own form. The third manner in which Self-contemplation can be performed is by means of pure feeling; that is, perceiving, if it may be so put, by sheer intuition, the pulsation of his own life-force, that is, the soul, the attention being fixed all the time on some particular psychic plexus. Mind, speech and body, then, are the three channels for the process. The trouble is that they are so unsteady, so vacillating, constantly changing every few moments. The saint aspires to adopt

the bodily channel exclusively. When this is accomplished and the words and the pictures are left behind then very soon great changes take place in the central organ of the mind, resulting in the destruction of the will itself and the attainment of full omniscience. There is no falling back from this position. The saint is now deified. The bodily association, now rendered harmless by the destruction of the will, continues, however, while its force of longevity works itself out. On its exhaustion the soul is released for ever from the bondage of flesh. This is salvation.

And he who sees no hope of accomplishing this task in his life-time? What of him? He is by no means to be disconsolate. The Bible has words of comfort for him. The founders of Christianity teach that until matter is got rid of in the scientific way that we have, in this book, seen them propound, he will have further opportunities of carrying on the good work until the flesh is destroyed for ever. But this subject deserves to be looked into fully. So let us begin it afresh in a new chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

Transmigration, the wandering of the soul from one body to another from beginningless time, is a very real fact, and not mere speculation or fancy. How can it be otherwise? Since with the aid of the Christian Teachers we have established the immortality of the soul, re-incarnation follows as a natural corollary. It is inconceivable for us to believe that in the vast, unimaginable eternity of time implied in the idea of a beginningless past to the present incarnation, this incorporation of the soul in a body is an event unprecedented in its experience. To deny this is to introduce the element of chance, and since this is not in keeping with a scientific examination of the facts, is not to be countenanced.

There are some who object to the truth of transmigration. Their objection is based on the grounds that because man has no recollection of his past lives he cannot have had any. But it is unreasonable to expect that he should remember them. In a new body, he begins afresh from where he left off. The knowledge and experience accumulated in the previous life have reshaped, remoulded his disposition, leading to the creation in the new life of an entirely new nervous system and a new central organ of the mind. The old nerve tracks and currents have disappeared, to make way for new arrangements. The old impressions are still stamped on the will which, bundle of impulses as it is, is the only thing carried over with the soul from life to life. They are not, however, retained as knowledge or ideas. They are preserved only as modifications of the feeling-tone and cannot be transformed into perceptions or recalled memory-images except when stirred powerfully by an external stimulus from old past haunts. With the new experiences in a new environment tumbling in on his consciousness, and the old nerve tracks gone, it is not surprising that they become fainter and fainter until crowded out they sink forgotten into oblivion. Perhaps if the individual were to come across something in his new life that used to stir up powerful emotions in the previous one the stimulus would be powerful enough to recall the old life to his consciousness. But it need not necessarily be so, for the reason

that it is not easy to retransform vague feelings of experience, or impressions, into images of recollection. The universe is so wide, the number of living beings so vast that it must be unusual for man to be reborn into his old surroundings and environment where alone lies the chance of meeting familiar faces or sights.

The fact that the embodied soul has been wandering from body to body from all eternity until now is plainly a scientific truth, since by nature it is immortal. What is more, it could have existed in the past only in one of two ways; either as a pure spirit, or as an impure ego; there is no other way in which it could exist. It could not have existed as a pure spirit. It it had, it would be a God, and there is no force in nature that has the power to drag a God into the bondage of flesh. Such a being has attained the perfection of freedom with its unclouded bliss, from the imperfection of slavery with its misery, by super-human efforts. It cannot be conceived for a moment that he would seek to re-enter into bondage. On this point we cannot do other than again agree with the wise Clement when he says: "For it is impossible that he who has once been made perfect by love, and feasts eternally and insatiably on the boundless joy of contemplation, should delight in small and grovelling things. For what rational cause remains any more to the man who has gained the 'light inaccessible,' for reverting to the good things of the world."

The embodied soul caught in the meshes of transmigration could have existed in the past, then, only in the condition of impurity; that is, in association with matter. Thus the question—"When was the union with matter first effected?" does not arise. It is a perfectly legitimate conclusion. Gold is found in the mine in an impure condition without anyone having ever deposited the pure metal there. In the same way we are entitled to take it that souls have always existed in a condition of impurity. However far back we go to the bottomless depths of the remotest past, we shall see the unredeemed soul always existing in the impure state; with its divine attributes crippled and curtailed by the association with matter. And as we have seen, the fusion is an intimate

one in the highest degree, for internal states are not affected by mere external juxtaposition, as witness the peppermint in the mouth whose stimulus has not the power to make itself felt by the soul until the soul turns to it of its own accord. It follows, then, that before the powers and attributes of the soul can be affected, actual fusion between spirit and matter, that is to say, the ensoulment of the spirit in matter, must take place. From this we can only conclude that the soul must have existed in an embodied condition prior to its present incarnation Furthermore it must consequently have experienced death elsewhere to be reborn here in its present form.

Death does not effect a complete separation of the spirit from matter. If it did the soul would immediately become a God. Were that the case, all the struggling and striving on the part of layman and saint would be rendered superfluous. The way of salvation, too, would no longer consist in right Faith, right Knowledge, right Conduct, as advocated by the Teachers. It would lie in any weapon of death and we should be forced to acknowledge murder and suicide as the greatest of boons. When, at death the soul is separated from its body some subtle, invisible, ethereal, electric type of matter remains adhering to it. It is mixed with the very substance of the soul to form with it a sort of dough. The spirit in other words is ensouled. St. Paul refers to this condition of the soul when in his Epistle to the Hebrews he speaks of the power of the Doctrine he was trying to bring to them. "For the word of God," he says, "is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." In this verse Paul points out the distinction that exists between spirit, soul and body. Spirit is the pure soul-substance—existing without any of the impurities of matter. The soul is impure soul-substance; impure because it is mixed and coated with matter. The body of course, is the gross body of matter visible to all. These three divisions of the constitution of a living being are again mentioned by Paul in his writings. This time it

is in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians when he expresses the hope—may "your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless . . . ."

St. Paul's division of a living being into spirit, soul and body, will be more readily understood if we use a metaphor by way of illustration. Let us say that the embodied soul is a sponge saturated with coloured water. The sponge is the outer body of gross, visible matter. The liquid, a compound of oxygen and hydrogen, is the pure spirit, oxygen, fused with the ethereal material, hydrogen, to form the soul. The colour of the water—one of its properties—symbolises the electric and magnetic properties of the subtle material in association with the soul. At death, to continue the metaphor, the sponge is discarded. But we can by no means infer from this that the liquid contained in it is therefore broken up into its component parts. As a matter of fact, we know from observation that the mere expression of the liquid from a sponge does not mean that it forthwith reverts back to the gaseous state, that is to the oxygen and hydrogen of which it is composed. An additional process, leading to their separation, is necessary for that. Thus we see that the soul as described by Paul is like the coloured water, and like it must undergo some further or special process if its components, spirit and matter, are to be separated.

When we probe into the matter still further, turning to the scientific side of the question, we see that so long as the soul incarnates in bodies an inner covering of fine matter is an essential to it, to serve as a link with the gross physical body. The necessity for such a link lies in the fact that in its absence the gulf that separates spirit from gross matter would be unbridgeable. Without it it would be impossible for the ego to use his bodily limbs, or even to come in contact with them. It is evident that there is no direct contact between the mind—the soul in one of its aspects—and gross matter. When, for instance, I am taking the measurements of a table, there is no direct contact between my immediate will or thought and the dimensions of the table. Nor is there any more immediate contact between my mind and my hand than there is between my mind and the ground on which I stand.

Thought cannot touch my hand. But the mind does come into contact with matter, otherwise I could not, by the energy of my will, make any movements with my hand at all. There must therefore be some sort of finer matter to serve as the connecting link between pure spirit and gross matter.

We now see how it is that fine filmy matter accompanies the soul in all its wanderings under all conditions, until it is finally redeemed in salvation, and the material is no longer formed. Death does not get rid of this inner material load. When, in death the soul is torn out from its gross outer body it does not emerge as a finished article. It does not slip out of the body as a man slips out of his overcoat, when he remains whole and entire and complete, undamaged, unlacerated, on emerging from it. The word death implies a forcible tearing asunder of soul and body. When it occurs the internal constitution of the soul is changed; and the framework of its disposition disrupted. The fine matter that is left in union with the soul has no fixed shape or form of its own. It has no hands, feet or other organs. It can be compared with an inchoate, 'formless' globule that possesses potentialities but no actual limbs.

Since the soul is a mixture of spirit and matter it can at once be seen that it is not possible for any unemancipated soul to lead an independent existence without an outer body except for the period of gestation, when it is actually developing in the womb, organising its bodily limbs, as a growing embryo. Even then some sort of gross material in a subtle form is being formed all the time. There is no wandering in the atmosphere, no hovering between heaven and earth for the ensouled spirit, for howsoever short a time. There are two reasons why this cannot be so. For one thing, when the impure spirit leaves its outer body it leaves behind perforce its memory. Torn asunder from its body it is bereft of the nervous system with its nerve tracks without which recollection is impossible. How, then, apart from anything else, is the spirit to return to haunts of which to all intents and purposes it knows nothing? And the other reason? Through its association with matter, the embodied soul is subject to the forces of attraction and magnetism, and it

and it is powerless to resist these forces. As soon therefore as it is torn from one body the implacable forces of attraction drag it into another. Clement describes the process exactly when he says: "For the demons [desires allegorically] having power by means of the food given to them, are admitted into your bodies by your own hands; and lying hid there for a long time, they become blended with your souls. And through the carelessness of those who think not, or even wish not, to help themselves, upon the dissolution of their bodies, their souls being united to the demon, are of necessity borne by it into whatever places it pleases." Tertullian too, was well aware of the principles of transmigration. He asks whether we believe that death ends everything. "Thou, man, of nature so exalted; if thou understand thyself . . . . lord of all these things that die and rise [like seasons, fruits etc;]—shalt thou die to perish evermore?" He does not stop for an answer but supplies it himself. "Wherever your dissolution shall have taken place, whatever material agent has destroyed you, or swallowed you up, or swept you away, or reduced you to nothingness, it shall again restore you."

The principle of attraction lies in the affinity of the pitch, tone and intensity of vibrations, in a word in rhythm. As we have learnt, rhythm is a characteristic of force in all its forms; and of substances when conceived as force, which they really are in the ultimate analysis. Different combinations and groupings of matter have different degrees and types of intensities, rates, pitches and tones of vibration. Just as it is with the impulses of the will. It is these factors which govern the choice of a new womb. For the principle which governs re-incarnation is this. The soul is attracted and drawn to that body where its internal vibrations are in accord with those of its environment; there it re-incarnates. It is a purely mechanical act. The soul has no other option than to obey the irresistible laws of attraction and magnetism.

We have seen that when the soul is precipitated into a new womb it carries with it its impulses in the shape of its will—the only thing appertaining to the old life that it does bring to the new. It cannot do otherwise.

Impulses cannot be erased by death for they are rooted in the very being of the soul, which we now know to be eternal. They are, moreover, active longings, not mere inert rubbish; for it is they that keep the soul in its agitated condition. These longings are always active; always engrossed in something or other that the soul hopes will be to its advantage. This being so it stands to reason that during its residence in the womb these forces cannot be standing still 'marking-time.' Somehow or other their activity must be engaged in action and operation. For what other purpose can these forces of the numerous kinds of desires incorporated in the will be utilised, if not for the work of the organisation of a new body? What else can they be doing if they are not contributing their quota to the task of shaping the limbs and organs of the body they are later to make use of?

There is a distinct correspondence between the individual's impulses and the capacities of his organism to gratify them. Think of the grasping hand intended to gratify the impulse that would seize its object. The feet that enable him to approach an object of desire on the one hand, and to fly from a possible source of danger on the other. The stomach that, unless it is very badly treated, is obliging enough to receive and dispose of the good things that flatter and tickle the palate with their flavour. The correspondence is striking, to say the least. Why this correspondence, and whence, if the organising forces are not the impulses themselves? Engaged during life in seeking their 'heart's desire' it is natural, with the outer body discarded for the time being, that they should occupy themselves with the material of which the new bodily limbs and organs are to be made, operating on it directly, moulding it into suitable forms. As a matter of fact the agitations and vibrations that emanate from them impinge on the nourishment absorbed from the mother's bloodstream. They turn it into the new organism's own flesh and blood, and mould it into organs and limbs. The process becomes 'visible' when the organism is delivered into the world. As a living being the soul continues to mould its 'growing' body. It is the individual who, from the food he absorbs, makes his own flesh. It is he who 'manufactures' his own teeth and bones, grows his own

hair and nails, and so on down to every intricate detail. In the fulness of time the sex-impulse leads to the maturity of the organs of generation and sex function, when the soul's new 'residence' is complete and mature.

It is now easy to understand that the fine inner material mixed with the soul is the sum-total of the effects of past activities on its part. The Biblical warning: "Be not deceived . . . . for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" can now be understood in its real meaning. This inner material or body is the seed of all the soul's mental and physical activities to be exhibited in the future incarnation. It is the momentum in which are gathered the effects of all the desires and passions, of the virtue and vice evolved out by the soul in the course of its career as an incarnating ego. It is the seed which readily germinates as soon as it finds itself in the soil that is congenial and suitable to its nature, borne thither by the magnetic forces operating upon its substance.

This fact is the key to much that is of absorbing interest to the seeker after truth. We see, first, that the age-old enigma—Fate or Free-will?—is soon solved. For we see that every act, mental or physical, good or bad, is a sowing of the 'seed'—an engendering of Fate. It is inevitable that with the seed once sown a harvest will be reaped. But the choice of acting or refraining from acting in the first place is the soul's—whence it is possible to say that we have Free-will. But there it ends. The seed sown and Fate engendered, Free-will is ousted to be replaced by the inevitable liability of bearing the consequences of actions, and the harvest which is sown must be reaped, gathered and assimilated in unmitigated fulness. Unless right Faith is acquired, and practised, to destroy the soul's bonds, which, however, can only happen where the bondage itself is of a sufficiently loose type to admit of this being done.

We know that it is through action that the subtle material is drawn into the soul's very fibre. That this material which places limits on its powers is the harvest reaped from the seed of action. That it is because of action that this material becomes the depository of the

individual's disposition, wherein is contained the quintessence of his character. We have also learnt that this fine matter which becomes blended with the soul through action is the cause of the perpetuation of its imprisonment in flesh. We have learnt, too, that here also resides the magnetic force that takes the soul into another womb at the appointed time. This means that the future status of the soul is thus also determined by the matter blended with it. Its nationality, descent, lineage, and family, depending as they do on the matrix into which it is drawn, are all fixed by this same agent. Transmigration, obeying as it must, the law of reaping as is sown is the only doctrine that is able to account to the satisfaction of the rational thinker for some of the many otherwise unsolvable enigmas of life. It is the only doctrine for instance, that offers a scientific explanation of the apparently ill-balanced, topsy-turvy inequality in the world. Those zealous, well-meaning people, the would-be reformers of the world, who chafe unavailingly against the seeming unjustness of nature, who would 'equalise' the world and put everyone as much on the same level as possible, are ignorant of the law of action and its inevitable fruit.

That 'lucky' one, the king, the ruler, the prince, the peer, born in the purple, possessed of all the glamorous things that the world can offer, riches and luxury, ease and comfort, dignity and power, is not thrown into such a position merely by chance, or good luck. The possession of these dazzling things is the outcome of meritorious conduct performed in the last life. He who is born in royal or ruling families attained his high rank by virtue of service to others, self-abnegation, humility and such-like acts performed in the preceding life. Is it not said in the Bible: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, etc; for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold?" And: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth?" How are such people to receive an hundredfold ? How are they to inherit the earth and become the world's rulers if not in an after life *on earth?*

Transmigration is one of the subjects concerning which plain speaking on the part of the Teachers would

have invited immediate death. The Jews no longer expressly entertained a belief in it, although it was originally an integral part of their creed and is still a part of their esoteric faith. Of the Fathers Origen was actually degraded because he spoke openly in favour of the doctrine of reincarnation. The Teachers do not therefore go into much detail on the subject and we have not their opinion as to how the soul merits the status it acquires in each successive incarnation. But clearly, by its own actions, it earns its status for itself. Those people born in an enviable environment surrounded with respect, pomp and circumstance, must be there because they merited it. It seems to me to be quite in keeping with rational thinking that the merit was earned in such ways as service. The serving of others, giving help in sickness or distress, is not menial work. It is unselfish work undertaken voluntarily, in denial of the self, performed willingly, gladly. Service carried out in such a spirit leads to nobility of character, and to the exaltation and elevation of the soul. The inner rhythm of the individual is affected and changed by such ennobling emotions. Affected by emotions of this kind, it is not reasonable to believe that it could possibly alight on and adjust itself to that which would lead it to any condition that is base, lowly, unexalted. This is the type of soul that enters the royal palace to become a king, and the ruler of a proud, conquering nation, and not an enslaved one. Such a soul would have a glorious ancestry of which to be proud, to make him carry his head high, noble and proud, a born ruler. It is this type of soul who inherits the earth. If a soul of this type erred in other respects so that it does not become a king, it is at least born as the lord of the manor and not as the serf owing allegiance to others, the tiller of the soil owned by others.

And that unfortunate at the other end of the scale? The 'unlucky' one, the poor, the down-trodden, the abject, the outcast? It is my conjecture, judging from the inexorable law of action, that in his previous incarnation he was of the despotic, bullying type. He was the tyrant who inculcated fear and abject terror into the hearts of others, who delighted to see his victims bow in fear and trembling before his brute force. Such a one

revels at first in the intoxicating, flattering strength and power of his might. But the Nemesis of action must inevitably overtake him. He is surrounded, saturated in an atmosphere of terror. The insidious force of auto-suggestion is set in motion; it seeps into his soul until under its insinuating influence his own will is affected by the vile atmosphere that surrounds him. The idea of terror sinks down deep into his own soul. His own will imbibes the poison and he begins to live in fear and terror that some bully greater even than himself will rise to strike him down. The seed is sown. The harvest is not reaped in the current incarnation. The force of auto-suggestion is not potent enough to produce effect in this life. But its seed germinates and takes root, in the soil of the matter mixed with his soul, and in the next life the bitter harvest is reaped. As Clement remarks: "All souls are immortal even those of the wicked for whom it were better that they were not deathless." In the next life the bully of the previous one drinks his own potion. His soul is attracted into the down-trodden nation or community. He is held in abject slavery, is utterly demoralised, or is reduced to some such state according to the amount of evil perpetrated in the last life and the amount of injury inflicted on others. These are they who according to Clement are "punished with the endless vengeance of quenchless fire." The quenchless fire is the never-ending suffering involved in transmigration, for continuing Clement writes, "and not dying, it is impossible for them to have a period put to their misery."

The law is that the ordinary individual, not particularly selfless, but yet not too selfishly engrossed in his own sense-gratification, is attracted to ordinary surroundings, neither too good, nor too bad. The supernormal individual, with his service to others and such attributes as self-abnegation, humility and profound respect for knowledge and truth, is led to a birth in a high family, amid happy, prosperous surroundings. The subnormal individual, with such things as tyranny and oppresion to his credit, is attracted into a low-born family, where he is despised and down-trodden. There are other factors which also lead to this condition. Excessive pride of birth, lineage, beauty or learning; insulting others on

account of their low birth; a lack of respect for truth. All these are capable of dragging the soul into low, undesirable surroundings. As Arnobius says, "just as each one has been formed to receive impressions from what is external, so he is affected: his condition is not caused by the influences of the things, but springs from the nature of his own senses, and connection with the external."

Thus we have seen from this one instance, the enquiry into the why and wherefore of status and family, how the doctrine of transmigration and the law of reaping as is sown explains the unexplainable. We see that justice does prevail. A relentless inexorable justice, undeviating, unswerving, with the scales much more perfectly balanced than ever man could tip them. Virtue is its own reward. Unfortunately its fruits are not for immediate gathering. The fact that they are forthcoming and that they mature with keeping is nothing to poor, ignorant humanity, who knows nothing of the law of cause and effect and its working; who can only rail at the seemingly gross injustice of the nature of things, when they compare the lot of the chosen few with that of the abandoned many.

The fact that the abandoned, the outcast, the suffering innocent, are working out the destiny that they themselves created for themselves is, of course, no reason why help is to be denied them, why they should be callously left to the suffering of expiation. The heart of the enlightened man will continue to bleed at the sight of so much misery. He will still continue to do what he can to lighten the burden of the suffering. He will still be only too glad to obey the Biblical injunction to be merciful. And: "Blessed are the merciful," says Christ, "for they shall obtain mercy." When in the next life the merciful one has himself to expiate some sin, small or great, committed in this one, his mercifulness will make itself felt. He will find himself in that environment where help will be forthcoming. It may be that it will arise from some unexpected quarter. Some people may come forward, perhaps those very ones to whom he showed mercy in the past, so that their internal vibrations will be functioning in sympathy. Whatever it may be, in some way or other

his expiation will be mitigated. The fact that the trait of mercifulness is more or less highly developed in his own disposition is also sure to make its impression felt, thus contributing its quota to a reduction of the suffering due to take place.

As we are already aware the Teachers were unable to go into the full details of transmigration. But from the facts we have elucidated thus far we can conjecture to a certain extent as to how the law of action does work, without, I think, going far wrong. To take the general aspects of an individual's life first When, for instance, a man experiences more happiness than not it is because in the past he cultivated in himself such feelings as mercy, kindness, sympathy, charity, tranquillity, renunciation, and the like. Action governed by these kinds of feelings attracts a lesser degree of matter into his soul, so that in his next life he is attracted into a body and into surroundings where the material influences are not overwhelming, where his soul's inherent bliss can make itself felt in a more pronounced manner than is possible in the life of the ordinary man.

In like manner, the man whose lot is a troublous one, who more often than not experiences more trouble than happiness, has to thank his own actions in the past. He probably gave pain to others and to himself; gave way to excessive grief, weeping, vain regrets; hardened his heart against others; and committed such other forms of actions as are opposed to happiness Under such influences he engenders forces that take him into surroundings where he is given good cause to indulge in them.

Let us now consider particular actions and their results. Why, for instance, people are sometimes born blind. The development and proper functioning of the eyes are generally prevented either by malformation of the eyes or of the visual centre of the brain. In both cases the clogging of some part of the organic structure is responsible for the total or partial destruction of vision. The clogging itself is due to the lodgment of particles of matter in a place where they have no business to be. Is it not reasonable to suggest that this can quite easily result from improper exercise of the function of vision in

the previous life? Think what must happen in such circumstances as when a man pretends not to see, when he affects disgust at the sight of a being or thing, especially when that being or thing happens to be an object of veneration or worship. The organs of vision are thrown into an unnatural, strained, or crooked attitude. When this happens the incoming particles of matter find a lodgment in places not intended for them. Here, it seems to me, are sound and logical reasons for the total or partial lack of vision. In like manner, of course, the other senses can be similarly affected. It is surely not unreasonable to believe that action affects most that part of the inner body which corresponds to the physical organ involved or concerned in its performance, or in the mental suggestion relating to its performance. The organ principally concerned in the performance of a deed is after all the natural seat of the material influx.

We could go on thus, finding the determining causes for this, that and everything *ad infinitum.* It is sufficient to say in a general way that enlightenment, virtue and goodness lead to exaltation of the soul, thus raising its rhythm, so that some of its negativity and listlessness is counteracted and it is attracted to better, worthier surroundings. Ignorance, evil and villainy, on the other hand, produce the opposite results. The soul is further de-pressed, debased, and is attracted into undesirable conditions.

But it is time that we went on to those other points still awaiting investigation. The fact that some people accept the doctrine of re-incarnation—the wandering of the soul from one human body to another—while denying transmigration—the wandering of the soul up and down the whole scale of being, human, animal, bird, even reptile and vegetable—needs looking into. Those who believe in the former truth but reject the latter are both unreasoning and illogical. Nor are they familiar with their Scriptures or they would see that the first Teachers of Christianity fully endorse the doctrine of transmigration. We gather their opinion on the subject from the writings of Tertullian. He is discussing and pointing out the weakness of Greek philosophical thought on trans-

migration. "There is nothing after death," he writes, "according to the school of Epicurus. After death all things come to an end, even death itself, says Seneca to like effect." He then expresses his pleasure when he notes that there was another school of thought among the Greeks, who, he says, although they did not grasp the whole truth yet came within reaching distance of it. "It is satisfying, however," he continues, "that the no less important philosophy of Pythagoras and Empedocles, and the Platonists take the contrary view, and declare the soul to be immortal; affirming, moreover, in a way which most nearly approaches (to our own doctrine), that the soul actually returns into bodies, although not the same bodies and not even those of human beings invariably; thus Euphorbus is supposed to have passed into Pythagoras and Homer into a Peacock. They firmly pronounced the soul's renewal to be in a body, (deeming it) more tolerable to change the quality (of the corporeal state) than to deny it wholly: they at least knocked at the door of truth, although they entered not. Thus the world with all its errors, does not ignore the resurrection of the dead."

The fundamentals of a living being are shared by man in common with every other being. The spark of life that is present in him is also present in them. They are possessed of souls therefore, as is man. They have a body—a shape and form—as has man. What distinguishes man from the beast is his intellect. The central organ of the mind is almost exclusively man's prerogative alone. But it is not necessarily his for ever. He cannot take it with him from one body to another. All he can do is to shape his will in such a manner that on death it takes him into a womb where it is possible for an intellect to be formed.

If we compare the actions of a being without an intellect with those of one who has it, we shall eventually see how fatally easy it is for man to descend into the animal world. That being who does not possess the central mental equipment lives in abject slavery to its senses. It cannot pause, deliberate and think; it cannot acquire wisdom from experience. It is unable to resist any appeal to its senses. It possesses no memory; again and again it will swallow the bait in succession and take no

warning from it. On the other hand, that being who has evolved out a central organ of the mind possesses the ability to withstand temptation. He can restrain himself; can bide his time. He can recollect previous experiences and be guided by recollection of them. The fact is that the differences between the two types consist in the inability of the one, and the ability of the other to withstand the powerful appeal of the senses. In one case the impulses are overpowering, in the other they admit of being curbed.

Now why is one being endowed with the gift of intellect while another is denied it? Again it comes back to the disposition evolved out by the soul and the impulses embedded in its substance. Since the impulses are carried over from one life to another he who possesses the power to curb them must have learnt to do so in his previous life. He must have disciplined himself that way. In other words, equipped in the past with the central mental equipment, he made good use of it. It did not lie fallow, dispensed with, as it were, so that there was no chance of it becoming atrophied. Thus his own inclinations, the fact that he wanted an intellect for his use, attracted him to a womb where it would be formed again for his active use in the future. In short, he was born as a human being.

But what happens in the case of the man who never uses his intellect so that it becomes atrophied for lack of use? We surely ought not to be surprised to see that he who does not trouble to use it to help him keep his appetites under control, who has become in other words an unthinking slave to his passions and desires, loses the organ of thought in the next life. Without it where else does he incarnate if he does not descend to the animal world, to those lower levels of life where there is no intellectual activity? What need has he for a mind? He does not live the life of the mind. The mind-desire will not be contained in the bundle of desires that are his will and the only thing that accompanies his soul on its 'after-death' journey to another womb. There will be no impulse therefore to impel the formation of a central organ of the mind and he will re-incarnate in a

womb where it is not evolved out. It is not wanted, consequently he goes where it will not be formed. Besides this, the brutal, sensual instincts developed by him in his present incarnation will only find complete satisfaction in a brute's body.

Whenever the animal propensities preponderate, outweighing the more tender human tendencies of his ego he can do nothing to prevent his soul from incarnating in an animal body, the species being determined by the degree of the animal instincts evolved out by his soul. It does not require much imagination to see, for example, how those who ill-treat their fellows, who show no mercy in their dealings with men, who batten on the weak and defenceless are the beasts of prey of the future. It is possible, perhaps, by observing every characteristic of an evil man's disposition, to foretell exactly what animal shape he will take on in his next incarnation. But, as Clement dryly observes: "If we were inclined to give all rein on this point, discussing into what various beasts one and another might probably be changed, we would need at our leisure to take up many points." It would indeed be as Clement says. A very, very subtle analysis of all the phases of an individual's disposition would have to be undertaken.

The fate of the man whose soul departs from the world without his having taken advantage of the rare, precious possession of intellect to free himself from the coils of action is well known to the Fathers. As usual it is the indefatigable Clement who would have man beware that such a fate does not overtake him. He says in connection with such cases that " when the soul departs from the body, it is driven forth from the light.... as ungrateful and unfaithful." Here it is, as plain as Clement could put it, that a human birth is a gift not to be lightly thrown away. Outside Godhood, it is the highest state of being for it is only from a human body that the soul can attain to that state. If man abuses his advantages, or fails to make use of them in a proper manner, is without gratitude for his superior gifts, is "ungrateful" and blithely refuses to utilise them, is "unfaithful," then next time he will not have the chance

to be either. He will find himself "driven forth from the light," with an animal "consciousness" that sees only as far as the gratification of its desires.

We see that existing thus it will be extremely difficult to get back the human status again. In the world of the brute where there is no intellect, opportunities for raising one's status must of a necessity be extremely rare. We can only guess at the suffering, the wandering about in the animal world, that the soul is bound to meet with before it is enabled to attain a human birth again. Probably there are souls who never do have an opportunity for lifting themselves from such an existence, but are doomed to wander in animal shape or worse through all eternity. No wonder we have Clement's warning against allowing the intellect to rust away in idleness. We have seen enough to show that he who allows his passions to run riot risks consequences such as he little dreams of.

It will be instructive to see just how it is that the mind becomes superfluous in the case of the unthinking, sense-gratifying man. We have seen how the soul is tied to the levers of movement in the central organ of the mind. But, in the case of the higher beings perception is not directly linked to action. There is a direct link only in the lower types of life. On the highest level of consciousness the mind enjoys the power of choice. It can substitute one kind of action for another. It can even inhibit action itself. We see therefore that direct connection between perception and action is lacking in the central organ of the mind. When, however, a man leads the life of a brute, or becomes the complete sensualist indulging his senses to the utmost, a direct connection between sensation and action will soon be established, and the freedom of choice will disappear. Thus the organ of thought becomes atrophied for want of use, and at the same time its fine filaments are coarsened by the establishment of the direct connection between perception and action. It is then impossible for anyone to expect that in a case such as this an organ of thought will be organised in the next body. Such a soul will fall back into the animal kingdom.

It is possible for man to fall even lower than into the animal kingdom Once on the down-grade path he may sink from the status of a five-sensed being with intellect to a five-sensed being without intellect and so on down to the bottom-most rung of the ladder to a vegetable being, the one-sensed type of life. The deeper the draughts of sense-gratification, the lesser the self-control, the deeper, the more intimate, the union between spirit and matter. The spirit sinks and sinks under the load of the matter imposed on it as the result of its overwhelming desires strengthened by continual gratification. If it should reach the lowest level to incarnate as a tree it becomes so much overwhelmed with material burdens as to become practically unconscious, retaining only the sense of touch. This is the "outer darkness" of Christ's teaching, so called because in such a condition the light of the consciousness and intellect is all but extinguished.

Thus far we have seen how the genus, status and ancestry of the soul in its new incarnation are determined by the fine, inner body with its magnetic forces that draw it into the womb suitable to its requirements. We shall now see that the length of life is also controlled by this inner body. To understand the nature of the force of longevity it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that birth and death are two alternating phases of the life of the ensouled spirit involved in the transmigratory cycle. Neither pure spirit nor matter suffer from the liability to death. The units of each being simple substances they are, consequently, indivisible and indestructible. They are not, therefore, liable to disintegration, so that with regard to each as a simple substance, no question of death enters.

This being so, the fact that the inner body of the unemancipated soul is the product of the union of spirit and matter means that it alone is the determining factor of the embodied soul's liability to birth and death. The fact that it is a compound means that it is subject to disintegration. It is subjected to changes of form because of the never-ceasing processes of inflow of new matter into its constitution and the dispersal or removal of old material. Really, it comes to this, it is Time, that

ubiquitous harbinger of change, which is death. The very essence of death is a change of condition. Time also precipitates a breaking up of a compound in subjection to the chemical action of elements and things on one another.

As we now know the bondage of the soul is prolonged by fresh material inflows. This means that great changes, quantitatively and qualitatively, take place periodically in the composition and structure of the fine matter mixed with the soul. Every so often, when through these changes the soul's association with its outer body is rendered impossible, it must depart from it and 'death' takes place. The association of body and soul should therefore come to an end by this natural method of the culmination of the unceasing processes of change and re-adjustment that take place internally. It is however, obvious that 'death' is brought about by a more abrupt and alas, much more common, manner. The separation of the soul from its gross body is, more often than not, prematurely brought about by disease and the impairment or destruction of some vital organ or organs.

The distinction between these two causes of death should be noted. In the one case the association is rendered impossible because of the changes in the structure of the *inner* body, due to time. In the other, it is due to the impairment or destruction of a vital organ or organs that pertain to the *outer* body. Those who deny premature death, who maintain that no one dies before his time, are ignorant of the fact that there is a force whose function is to regulate the material duration of life and that it resides in an inner body invisible to the eye. This truth is made more difficult to see because of the fact that it is so rarely allowed to spend itself out. So often is it overridden by an accidental or premature termination of life as the result of forces operating from without. In such cases the inner frame of the soul is disrupted through an outer causation, and when this happens the remaining unconsumed force of longevity is, of course, dissipated at once.

We now come to the idea sometimes held that the perpetuation of the physical body is possible. In the

light of what has gone before we see that the idea is a self-contradiction. The force of longevity can be compared with a lump of sugar that is placed in a flowing channel of water. Sooner or later the sugar is dissolved. So it is with the force of longevity. Nor is it possible to regenerate it, or add to its stores of vitality. The nucleus of the past is like the effervescence of aerated water. There are no means by which it can be augmented.

We come now to yet another group of forces that find a home in the inner body of the soul. They are those that interfere with the soul's faculties in regard to knowledge, perception, conviction, conduct and energy. Let us deal with them one by one. The fact that the blinding, clogging matter of the inner body interferes directly with knowledge and perception so that it is often difficult to listen to anything pertaining to truth, let alone to adopt it as correct, is recognised by the Fathers, as is clear from the writings of Theophilus. "All these things," he teaches, "involve you in darkness, as when a filmy defluxion on the eyes prevents one from beholding the light of the sun: thus also do iniquities, O man, involve you in darkness, so that you cannot see God." The 'eyes' of the soul are so blinded by the particles of matter that it cannot recognise itself as God. We can now understand how easily false ideas can arise, how right knowledge can be aborted and wrong convictions set up in its place. We have, in this connection more proof, from Clement's pen this time, to show that the first Teachers included the truth of transmigration in their Doctrine. Clement is again pointing out the dangers of ignorance; again trying to emphasise, within the very narrow limits allowed him, the need that every man has to take the utmost pains to enlighten himself He traces out the history of ignorance. "From all these things, therefore," he says, "it is concluded that all evil springs from ignorance; and ignorance herself, the mother of all evils, is sprung from carelessness and sloth, and is nourished, and increased, and rooted in the senses of men by negligence." He then says: "and if any one teach that she is to be put to flight, she is with difficulty and indignantly torn away, as from an ancient and hereditary abode." The "ancient and hereditary abode" is something more than the present

body that contains it. What Clement hesitated to put more plainly was the fact that ignorance is difficult to eradicate because it is rooted deep down in the remotest antiquity. Ever waxing and flourishing it has accompanied the soul from body to body through ageless time.

The force which serves to keep the soul in ignorance, is, perhaps, the most malignant of all. If it is really strong it is capable of preventing the soul that harbours it from ever attaining its freedom. It has the power to condemn it to eternal transmigration, without rest, without respite. It is this fact which explains Christ's saying that "many be called but few chosen." It is a force engendered by the most malignant types of action. When it is present in its full strength it covers over the natural light of the soul to such a degree that the individual becomes fanatically hostile to the teaching of Truth. The truth may be brought to many. But if, by their own evil action, they have engendered this force they will be prevented from recognising it as truth. In such cases matter so obscures the intellect that they are incapable of unbiased, unprejudiced reasoning. Such people, when confronted with the truth merely ridicule or abuse it. Some even delight in persecuting its messengers. When this happens fanaticism becomes ever more engrained in the substance of the soul, its forces become ever more powerful in each incarnation. The unhappy result is that since freedom cannot be attained until the soul adopts right Faith, he whose face is stubbornly and resolutely set against the light of Truth can never attain it.

Not without truth does Christ say: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." It is the world of the flesh that leads to destruction. With its broad way of sensual pleasure that is so easy to tread, so soft to the feet, with its gate ever flung wide in invitation to the unwary, the unthinking, it is no wonder that many wayfarers enter in, and miss the strait gate, the narrow path of the world of the soul. In this world the portals are narrow, the path

is stony and instead of broadening it closes ever in, until the world of pleasure is altogether shut out. This is the path that only the most diligent and the most discriminating ever find, that only the lion-hearted enter in. Wherefore we have Christ's injunction, according to St. Luke: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." He foresaw that many, even if they did come across it, would yet turn away from its austereness. "For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able."

These are the ones concerning whom Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, says: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." Only those whose actions allow to be preserved in them an open mind can receive and accept the preaching of the cross which demands the crucifixion of the fleshly self. Only "unto us which are saved," says St. Paul, "It is the power of God." Thus we see that because Truth is difficult to acquire and refuses to allow itself to be gathered by undiscriminating, unworthy hands it is only the fortunate few who may attain to freedom. "Though," says St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, "the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." According to him, it is "a remnant according to the election of grace." In whom in other words, is the grace of Truth.

And even when the matter of which the inner body consists allows of knowledge being acquired it still harbours forces which interfere with energy and conduct. So that even though we may acquire knowledge of the truth we have yet not sufficient energy to put it into practice. Paul, one of the cleverest of the Christian psychologists, describes this internal conflict in his own inimitable language. He laments bitterly because of the diabolical power of matter. "For the good that I would I do not; but the evil that I would not that I do . . . . . I delight in the law of God after the inward man; But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of mind."

This, I think, disposes of all the chief forces that find a lodging within the inner body of the soul. We have seen that a living being is but clay in the hands of

the potter desire, to be given the shape that desire wills. We have seen that death, far from being the end of all things, is merely the gateway to rebirth. It would be strange if we did not realise by now that man is doomed ever to wander in transmigration until, through the way of right Faith, right Knowledge, right Conduct, he throws off the yoke of desire that keeps him an embodied slave to action. He has the consolation of knowing that this superhuman task is not necessarily to be accomplished in one life-time.

We have seen how the Teachers prescribe a two-fold path of progress—preliminary and advanced. From what Clement says in a certain passage of his writings it seems that the beginning of old age is the best time to change from the lower path to the higher, to start in earnest the conquest of desire. Having trod the pious householder's way for many years he has by the time old age is reached received some training in renunciation and self-discipline. I suppose the Teachers felt that then was the time to begin the fight in earnest. Says Clement in regard to it: "If you have respect for old age, be wise, now that you have reached life's sunset; and albeit at the close of life, acquire the knowledge of God, that the end of life may to you prove the beginning of salvation." If Clement did not know that other earthly existences were 'waiting' to be worked off by the embodied soul would he have suggested that the end of life is for the wise man the beginning of salvation?

We see from his writings that Clement teaches that from the time that right Faith grounded on scientific conviction is adopted, the now enlightened soul changes always for the better. All the progress made in each successive incarnation goes to the credit side of the ledger, as it were. In the next life it becomes incorporated in the quintessence of his disposition; making him ever stronger in the fight against desire. As he progresses further along the path of renunciation so in each life he is attracted into those surroundings and conditions that bring the day of victory ever nearer to hand. Always he is enabled to improve his condition, physically and spiritually, and he attains to the highest excellencies possible in the embodied state. He continues in this manner until

eventually the day does dawn when his victory is complete and his aim realised. "Accordingly," to use Clement's own mystic phrases, "after the highest excellencies in flesh, changing always duly to the better, he urges his flight to the ancestral hall, through the holy septenniad to the Lord's own mansions . . . ."

What actually happens is that with perfect knowledge transformed into perfect conduct and the concomitant state of desirelessness the aspiring one finally succeeds in changing the pole of his magnetism. The particles of the matter that ensoul his spirit, from being attracted and held together, are repelled and dispersed. The body is destroyed; the yoke thrown off. Pure spirit remains; free and whole—"holy." As Clement says, "and man, when deified purely into a passionless state, becomes a unit."

It is that "resurrection of the dead" that Paul in particular was so anxious to attain, as his Epistle to the Philippians shows. This resurrection is, according to Methodius, one of the Fathers, the tabernacle of the soul. "For account the resurrection to be the erection of the tabernacle," he says. And the tabernacle? Methodius calls it "the heavenly dwelling of the soul." "For the pattern which was shown to Moses in the mount, to which he was to have regard in fashioning the Tabernacle, was a kind of accurate representation of the heavenly dwelling, which we now perceive more clearly than through types, yet more darkly than if we saw the reality." Methodius is careful to emphasise that it is a state to be attained only by right living. "Account that the things which are taken for the putting together of the tabernacle are the works of righteousness." Come to its own at last the pure unfettered spirit enters its kingdom of heaven. As Clement says with a becoming sense of fitness: "When the world shall pass away, then the kingdom of heaven shall be opened." The soul enters, "to be," says Clement, "a light, steady, and continuing eternally, entirely and in every part immutable."

There are many quotations from the Christian Scriptures to show that the Teachers firmly believed that when the soul achieves its freedom it then becomes a

God. When the soul is free, the "fulness of God" comes upon it, in the words of St. Paul. "To be incorruptible," says Clement, "is to partake of divinity." And again, the freed soul "having become wholly spiritual, and having in the spiritual church gone to what is of kindred nature, it abides in the rest of God." He finally clinches the matter by declaring that when spirits attain their freedom it is a "restoration to the everlasting contemplation and they are called by the appellation of Gods." What more proof do we need to see that a belief in the existence of the soul as a divine being is the very crux of the true Christian teaching? As is said in the Revelation, "he that overcometh shall inherit all things." In this state the divine attributes are manifested. The soul is omniscient. According to Clement, "practical wisdom is divine knowledge, and exists in those who are deified." It is blissful. All the Teachers unite to sing of its blissful state. "There shall be no more death," exults St. John in his Revelation, "neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Again John voices the joy of the Apostles on the blessedness of the pure soul. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie . . . ."

And when we turn again to the Fathers? Listen to what Clement has to say. "In the soul the pain is gone, but the good remains; and the sweet is left, but the base wiped away. For these are two qualities of each soul, by which is known that which is glorified, and that which is condemned." Hippolytus, too, is moved to ecstasy over the happy state of the emancipated soul "in which," according to him, "there is neither sleep, nor pain, nor corruption, nor care, nor night, nor day measured by time." He adds: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Again he exults in the blessedness of the pure state. "For the incorruptible nature is not the subject of generation; it grows not, sleeps not, hungers not, thirsts not, is not wearied, suffereth not, dies not, is not pierced by nails and spears, sweats not, drops not with blood. Of such

kind are the natures of the angels and of souls released from the body. For these are of another kind, and different from these creatures of our world, which are visible and perishing." Origen, too, in his Philocalia rejoices in the pure soul "no longer having the qualities of fleshly weakness and . . . . . pollutions."

Nor, when the soul is free is there marrying or giving in marriage. It cannot very well be otherwise. The soul that has risen from the dead has no body and is consequently sexless. This is endorsed by Christ, when in St. Luke's Gospel he says: "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage." Clement waxes scornful when he hears "distinctions of sex attributed to the immortal gods." He goes on "I ask of each man whether he himself believes in his own mind, and persuades himself that the race of gods is [so] distinguished that they are male and female, and have been formed with members arranged suitably for the begetting of young?" Tertullian exactly expresses the Christian view when he says: "But to Christians, after their departure from the world, no restoration of marriage is promised in the day of resurrection, translated as they will be into the condition and sanctity of angels."

Existing now in its own natural simplicity the freed spirit is eternal and indestructible. Death, "the last enemy" St. Paul calls it in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, is conquered for ever. Paul puts it very beautifully when, again in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, he says: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." St. John also notes in the Revelation that the conquering soul "shall go no more out" in transmigration; in fact, he asserts exultantly that "they shall reign for ever and ever." And among the Fathers, Tertullian rejoices in the conquest of death. "And after this," he says, "there is neither death nor repeated resurrections." Best of all, Christ, too, sets his seal on the defeat of death. We remember

that he has already told us that the Son abideth in the house for ever. In the Gospel of St. Luke, he says: "Neither can they die any more: for they are .... the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

With the glory of the deified spirit in our eyes, we come to the end of our enquiry. Our researches into the most authentic of the Christain Scriptures have produced their yield. And in what measure! We have come to realise that when Christianity is taken at the face-value of the mystic language in which it is written it is all that the man of science accuses it of being. It is irrational; it is inconsistent; it is confusing. We have come to realise that no men in their senses would ever think of preserving so much irrational nonsense for the bewilderment and misguidance of future generations. We were lucky enough to see that since they did not make sense when read literally there must be a hidden meaning. That only this could explain why it was apparently so clumsily written down, but why withal it was so carefully preserved. If it was worth all this trouble it must contain valuables worth the preserving. Working on this supposition we set out to find them. What a treasure we have found. In our search for Knowledge and Truth we have been rewarded a thousandfold. Seek indeed and ye shall find; knock, and verily it shall be opened unto you.

Our labour now is finished. We have accomplished what we set out to do. We can offer proof to the satisfaction of any rational, critical mind of the existence of the soul. We can show him that it possesses the divine attributes that when freed from matter raise it to the glory of a God. We can show him the thoroughly practical method by which this can be done. Above all, we have the immense pleasure of showing him that we have the firm, unequivocal support of the Christian Teachers in our findings; that our findings are indeed none other than their secret Doctrine that has lain hidden from their time until now.

When I think over all that has been revealed by our search it seems to me that the most valuable asset in life is Knowledge—right Knowledge with unlimited faith in

it. Seek diligently the truth, adopt it, believe steadfastly in it, and everything else follows in its right place. That is the thought underlying Clement's words when he says: "Knowledge is therefore quick in purifying ..... Thence also with ease it removes the soul to what is akin to the soul, divine, and holy, and by its own light conveys man through the mystic stages of advancement, till it restores the pure in heart to the crowning place of rest."

Nothing more remains to be said. Except perhaps a warning. It shall not come from my lips. I shall let the strong, robust language of the Old Testament say it for me. Were I to express it in my own words I should not dare to be so forcible. Certainly I could not put it better. I know that I have already broken my resolution not to call upon the Old Testament for support and fell to the temptation of quoting a passage that I could not resist, so aptly did it fit the situation. I fall again unashamed. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

CONCLUSION

It will have been noticed that nothing has been said about Christ himself apart from the quoting of certain of his reputed sayings. There has been no need to. The Christian Doctrine that has been disclosed in these pages does not rest on the life story of any one man. That it is a complete doctrine capable of satisfying any rational mind is enough. It is not even necessary to determine the historicity of Jesus. Somebody uttered the Doctrine, unquestionably. Who it was is of no consequence. Call him Jesus if you like; it hurts no one. Beyond that there is nothing certain, nothing definite. When we ask the question—"Was this Jesus of ours the son of God?"—it is a different matter. Clearly he was not. Gods do not have sons. They do not even have wives. The Apostles Mark and John do not support by a single word the "Virgin Birth" story. On the other hand John defines for us a son of God. When speaking of those who receive the word of God he says: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." All those who receive the word can claim to be sons of God.

No consistent history of the Christ into whose mouth the doctrine has been put can be composed. If we are to treat him as an historical figure we are entitled to look out for the steps he took to attain his greatness. But the Gospels are silent on this point, beyond the fact that he was driven into the wilderness and fasted for forty days. A life with so few landmarks furnishes few footsteps in which we can follow. It seems to me therefore, that the best view to take on the subject is to say that the Teacher in the Gospels who might, or might not, have been called Jesus has a doctrine of real worth to give and that that doctrine can be worked out with enough explicitness to enable us to attain to real and lasting greatness. Setting up a man or a God as an idol to be worshipped serves no

purpose. On the contrary it is harmful, because it prevents the doctrine from being learnt and put into practice.

This question as to the historicity of Jesus leads us to a consideration of the age of the Christian religion. Christianity certainly appears to be much older than the A. D. era Its tenets existed in the world in one form or another before the beginning of the Christian civilisation. It would seem that originally the doctrine was preserved and imparted in the form of a Mystery Play. The central figure was assigned to Jesus, a man who became a son of God as defined by John. When the numbers of adherents began to increase it was found necessary to compile fuller, more complete records of the doctrine. The fear of persecution—of being lynched, or stoned to death, or crucified—that was ever present prevented the Teachers from opening their mouths fully. Their dilemma compelled them to resort to allegory. They evidently recognised the fact that allegory is liable to be taken in the historical sense. The mis-statements of facts and data, such as John the Baptist sending messengers to Jesus from his prison, to ask of him whether or not he was the promised Saviour, after he was supposed to have recognised his presence from his mother's womb and later to have hesitated to baptise Christ at his bidding out of respect for the latter's superiority, were for this reason introduced carefully and deliberately. In this way an historical reading of their text would be nullified and the discerning reader would at once be put on his guard. Even this device did not prove sufficient warning, as we can see in our own times. Men still insist on reading the Gospels as if they constituted history.

A number of the Epistles were then composed, written in the name of St. Paul who, like Christ, might or might not be an historical figure. He is described as a posthumous Apostle and the *raison d'etre* of the Book of Acts of the Apostles is to invest this writer, Paul, with authenticity and unimpeachable authority. The Book of Acts does not refer to more than four or five Apostles, and by far the greater bulk of its pages are devoted to the doings of St. Paul, aiming all the time to show that he

was an extensive traveller, a zealous missionary, and a successful converter of pagans. They even imprisoned and persecuted him, in their endeavour to show him as an ardent and devoted follower of the doctrine, willing to undergo any maltreatment for its sake. His Epistles are addressed to the various churches and it is a curious fact that no other Apostle ever wrote a letter to any community by name. The other Epistles in the New Testament are few, and are intended either to fill in the gaps left by Paul in his elucidations, or to strengthen and uphold his authority, as witness Peter in his second Epistle. "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

All this points plainly to one thing. The aim of the Teachers was to reveal as much of the doctrine as they dared and they resorted to various contrivances to carry it out. Finally the Revelation of St. John was compiled. The whole doctrine is there summed up and written as one consistent allegory to settle and clear up all points concerning it once and for all and for ever. It was humanity's loss that the knowledge of the Fathers died with them; that the doctrine has remained lost and unrecognised throughout the centuries that have elapsed since their time. It is, however, all there in the books, open to anyone who wishes to study Truth.

When we turn our attention still further to the Gospel writers we see that for nearly two thousand years they have been masquerading as poor, harmless, half-witted men, simple fisher-folk and the like. It was their aim. Not that the masquerade should have continued for so long, to the confusion of humanity, but that they should appear to be silly and their teaching muddled and confused nonsense. It was the only defence they had against persecution. The only way that their teaching could be put into writing and thus preserved for the enlightenment of future generations. They had to make it appear silly,

contradictory, irrational. They had to disguise it, so that possible persecutors would laugh at it as harmless rubbish not worth the destroying. Unfortunately for us it was disguised so well that humanity has been misled for centuries.

When we ponder over the doctrine they were at such pains to conceal from hostile eyes and at the same time preserve for future seekers after Truth, we see that in reality they were far more than ordinarily clever. They hid their knowledge deliberately. In the light of their doctrine we see them unmasked. They are philosophers of the highest order, and superb linguists. Their skill in allegory and confusing condensation has never been surpassed. Consider as an example the sentence that John puts into Christ's mouth. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." A way of salvation that has taken me the space of several chapters to elucidate is condensed into one magnificently simple sentence.

The whole of this book bears eloquent testimony to the intellectual heights to which the Apostles attained. See what wonderful condensation Luke achieves when he compresses the whole doctrine into three or four sentences. "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." In a few lines we are given a wealth of information. Souls are divine, and capable of leading an existence independent of the body, but at present they are held in bondage to the flesh. By their own merit and worth they may attain the resurrection of the dead, to a life separate from the body, when they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, nor can they die any more. Tersely, laconically, the quintessence of the whole philosophy of the doctrine of redemption is compressed in a nutshell and at the same time achieves two other purposes. It negatives altogether the popular theory of bodily resurrection. It completely hides the doctrine from the astutest pig and the most faithful tail-wagger. Will any-

one say that this miracle of condensation, this concise summing-up, this clever disguising of the real doctrine that has taken in and fooled every modern philosopher without exception, could by any possibility of chance be the work of the untutored fishermen, the simple rustics that present-day theologians would have us believe the Apostles were? How was this amazing feat of concealment effected? Simply by witholding the explanation as to why the risen dead did not marry nor were given in marriage. This has baffled all men even the most learned of theologions and metaphysicians who believe in a bodily resurrection. The fact that no philosopher since their times has ever understood the real language of their script furnishes in itself eloquent testimony to their immeasurable merit. They might have begun as catchers of fish but they certainly ended as "fishers of men," as they had been promised by their Teacher.

After them came the Ante Nicene Christian Fathers to carry the torch of enlightenment still further. In general they follow the Pauline style except that whenever they can they give fuller explanations of the various points of the doctrine. They, too, have to take the same great care to conceal the real teaching from the vulgar profane.

Before we conclude we should bestow a thought on the faith of the Fathers and their qualification to teach Christianity. Do they lay themselves open to the accusation of unorthodoxy? If they do, then we shall have to accuse St. John, St. Paul, the other Gospel writers, even Jesus Christ himself, of unorthodoxy. The doctrine is implied in every word uttered by Jesus, in every sentence of Paul's voluminous epistles, in every line of the Revelation of St. John. And the Fathers? To anyone who reads their writings it must become apparent that all the time they are trying to establish the esoteric view of the teaching. That whenever possible they discard the exoteric outer garb. Working thus, altogether devoted to their doctrine, they make it clear in every way that the real view is the hidden esoteric doctrine. Can they be accused of hypocrisy? Were they not sincere, honest men who had accepted Christianity from choice? In the light of their knowledge we cannot think otherwise than that they adhered to

the inner view of the new creed and accepted its outer garb only because it offered protection from the hostile masses.

Another thing. Where did they acquire the secret teaching if not from the propagators of Christianity themselves? If they had already known the doctrine and believed in it they would not have accepted Christianity. They cared only for their doctrine. Its name would not have worried them. When they adopted Christianity it must have been because they found it irresistibly attractive. Their preference for its hidden meaning shows without any suspicion of doubt that what attracted them was not the outer husk but the kernel within. It follows from this that the Fathers could have learnt their creed only from the founders of Christianity themselves. The title 'Father' would never have been given to muddleheaded men preaching a mixture of orthodoxy and 'paganism': and much less to those who only preached the latter in disguise all the time. It is clear that those who heard the Fathers and read their writings, and regarded them as the fathers of the church, knew that they were something more than muddleheaded pagans. They knew them as men who really understood the truth of Christianity, who found themselves, like the authors of the Gospels and Epistles before them, forced to conceal and disguise their thought.

As I said in the first chapter, orthodoxy has no worthy doctrine. The doctrine which Jesus condensed and compressed whenever possible in the fewest of words, which the Gospels conceal rather than reveal, which the Epistles guardedly partly reveal, which the Revelation allegorises, which is the real thing of value; it is this doctrine which the Fathers propound and enunciate in their clever, mystifying way.

It only remains to be said that the Christian doctrine that has been disentangled and elucidated here is a thoroughly practical one and provides the only remedy for this world of ours that has grown so sick and bitter in its delusions. Christianity has appeared to be unpractical because the Teachers were not free to give a clear and lucid discourse on any part of the doctrine, nor to guide

men as to how it was to be put into practice. Because of the hostility of the masses they had to leave large gaps, but we have seen that a distinction between the preliminary and more advanced stages of the Path was ever present in their minds. Christ himself says in connection with his injunction on celibacy: "He that is able to receive it let him receive it." Clearly it was to be undertaken only by those able to carry it out with a cheerful heart. For the others marriage was recommended until such time as they were ready for further progress. We have seen for ourselves how important the distinction between the two paths is. The rich man, for instance, cannot be expected to give away at once his wealth in charity. When such a man is inspired with the Truth and adheres faithfully to the preliminary path he will find towards the end of life, when he is ready to step on to the higher path, that his wealth will bar his way to further progress. With the preliminary training as a pious householder to support his desire for further progress, coupled with the fear of falling back into transmigration with its inevitable births and deaths, he will cheerfully give up the wealth that would hold him back.

As for the utility of the doctrine in general, right Knowledge, with a strong faith in it, will singe, and later burn up, all the lying, injustice, iniquity; all the foolish cravings and greedy, lustful ambitions that constitute the grievous sickness of the modern world. For faith means nothing if not a change of heart. We recall that he who acquires right Faith is called a God. "He called them Gods unto whom the word of God came." Imbued with right Faith he is invested with the grace of divinity which makes it impossible for him to be unjust, tyrannical, despotic, aggressive. If the light of right Knowledge could penetrate everywhere there would be peace in the world and in the hearts of men. The orthodox Church doctrine is the ghastly failure it is because it has failed to change the hearts of men. The true doctrine, with its alternatives that is all that can be offered to man—eternal life as a pure soul, or eternal life as a slave forever caught in the web of transmigration with its endless procession of births and deaths and the ever-present fear of a fall into the animal world or lower—can do so.

APPENDIX A

The Mystery of God

As I have said before I am not writing this time on the interpretation of allegories, but the one about the ***Causa Causans***, the so-called first cause of things, needs to be explained.

The nature of the Godhead is one of the profoundest of secrets in both Judaism and Christianity. In the book of Genesis God amazes us greatly by saying with reference to Adam: "Behold the man has become as *one of us.*" This is strange language, indeed. *One of us*! But how? And where is, then, the lofty monotheism of which so much is made by our theologians? The words quoted are plain and almost speak out from the print.

Let us now turn to Jesus who says that none can know the Father unless the son reveal him. The Jews, on this view, could not have known the Father prior to the advent of Jesus, for no one like a son of God had appeared to them to reveal him or to tell them anything about him. But the trouble is that most of the people who saw Jesus himself did not believe that they had seen the Father, or a God in any form. The revelation if there was one must have been very feeble.

But what did Jesus mean by his words? Did he mean that the son was to describe the Father or reveal him in some other way? It will be seen that a verbal description is not what was meant, for anyone can repeat all kinds of words and phrases. What was meant was the manifestation of divine glory itself, surely.

St. Paul thinks that there is great mystery about the Godhead which he calls the mystery of God. He also refers to the mystery of Christ. In the fourth Gospel the the personality of Jesus has been modelled on the pattern of the Logos which is pre-Christian. The Logos is not the son but co-eternal with the Father, and was never not, which the will may be forced to swallow, but the intellect not.

In the book of Revelation God is placed on a throne but he is not shown to be possessed of any feature or

form. The words used are only: "*one* sat on the throne." The placing of Italics on *one* draws attention to the fact that in the original the pronoun itself is wanting, though it had to be inserted in the translation to make the sense grammatically correct. Whence, then, the text according to which God made man in his own image? St. John has something more stunning still to hurl at the intellect. makes his four queer beasts with eyes all over and huge wings sprawl over and round about the throne of God and right in the midst of it. In other words, they are at home on his throne and fill it completely. Did not John know that the dignity of God is supreme and that not even angels and men, not to mention beastly cattle, can sit on his seat? Yet he was inspired when writing the Revelation, and his statement must be taken to be a deliberate one. According to him, Christ also sits on the throne of God and those who follow him will also sit on that very throne along with Christ.

In the Johannine gospel Jesus gave utterance once upon a time to a strange piece of information which is a perfect conundrum in itself. "Before Abraham was I am," is what he said to certain Jews who had asked him as to how Abraham could have seen his day, considering that he was very young. Surely, this is another mystery and a major one, if grammar is to be saved from being murdered.

I shall now refer to Dionysius who has some strange things to say about the *Causa Causans*. This is how he proceeds :—

"We say that it is neither soul nor mind; that it is without imagination, opinion, reasons, and intelligence; that it can neither be uttered nor conceived; that it is not number or order or greatness or littleness, or quality or inequality, or likeness or unlikeness; that it stands not nor moves nor rests; that it neither has power nor is power nor light; that it neither lives nor is life; that it is not being nor eternity nor time; that it is not perceived by the mind; that it is neither knowledge nor truth, neither sovereignty nor wisdom; neither one nor oneness, neither divinity nor goodness; that it is not spirit as we know it, nor sonship,

nor fatherhood, nor any other of the things known to us or to any one else; that it is neither one of the things that are not, nor one of the things that are; that neither do existing things know it as it is, nor does it know existing things as existing; that it is devoid of reason, of name, of knowledge; that it is neither darkness nor light; neither error nor truth; nor can it be in any way affirmed or denied."

I have quoted these words from McGiffert's "History of Christian Thought;" they are certainly strange if not funny; and would be regarded as silly and unacceptable but for the fact that they proceed from a seemingly sensible writer whose words were welcomed by a number of thinkers of his time.

According to Clement, God himself is so transcendent that neither creation nor revelation is possible to him nor can men attain to a knowledge of him. But through the Logos and Logos alone God creates all things that exist, and through the Logos he makes himself known to men and is known by them. It is the Logos who governs the world and cares for the individual. In the Logos the abstract becomes concrete, the absolute enters into relations, and God creates the world and reveals himself to men. The Logos is divine, he is God himself, not a secondary or subordinate divinity. He is the image of God, and the 'truly most manifest God'. In himself God is far away and inaccessible, but in the Logos he is near and pervades all being.

McGiffert is of the opinion that clearness as to the exact status of the Logos and his precise relationship to God Clement did not reach. It certainly does seem like a muddle; but let us try to get hold of the reason for its existence if one can be found.

We begin with God as the absolute, the *Causa Causans*. The Logos is only the first-born, though eternal. Now if we cast about for an absolute we shall see that only a quality, an abstract metaphysical quality as distinguished from concrete nature, can be conceived as absolute. And it is a characteristic of an abstraction that

it is indescribable in words and not analysable. For instance we can describe a good act but not goodness; a fluid but not fluidity; man but not humanity. We can now appreciate why Jesus said that nobody could know the Father except the Son reveal him. We can also now admire the tantalisingly charming language of Dionysius and Clement which appeared to be so silly before. Clement as a matter of fact actually says that in Logos the absolute becomes concrete.

Which of the abstract qualities does the absolute represent is our next question. He is the cause of all beings. If he were not there there would be no being. He is not the creator; but without him nothing else can *be* He has the widest immanence. We can even say that we live and move and have our being in him; even the wonderful beasts of St. John's Revelation are seen occupying and filling his throne. As such, that is as a pure metaphysical abstraction, he is not divinity, nor reason, nor light, nor power, nor knowledge, nor ignorance, nor oneness, nor manyness, nor equality, nor inequality; and he is not even endowed with a quality, for a quality only appertains to a substance, never to a quality. He is, indeed, not even a quality; he is only an abstraction. For a quality is something perceived as present in individuals whereas an abstraction is never seeable. It bears reference to a generality, or class, not to individuals. He is simply existence or life—not an existing or living being, only the quality common to all existing living beings. The four beasts of St. John represent the four elements of matter, as follows:—

1. the lion walks on earth and represents earth,
2. the calf is the sea-calf or sea-lion and represents water;
3. the flying eagle stands for air;
4. the face of man represents the sun which gives us the fourth element, fire.

Wings represent time, since it flies, and eyes are symbols for souls, that is perceiving, living beings. The imagery of the Revelation thus gives us a very exact and definite idea of God, the absolute. He is Existence, Life

itself, conceived as a quality, common to all living beings. This is supported by a declaration of Jehovah himself who said: "I am thy life." When Jesus said: "Before Abraham was I am," he also only meant that before Abraham was life. This needs a little explanation to be intelligible. The term "I am" in this text is not made up of two unlinked words the "I" and the "am;" it is used like one word. Its I is not a pronoun, nor its am a verb. The two taken together constitute a single term and a noun. On a transposition of words the reply of Jesus thus reads "'I—AM' was before Abraham." Thus understood it is no longer repugnant to sense nor an instance of bad grammar.

But who is I-AM? It is the name of Existence or Life. Truly, Life can have no other name since it is without feature or form. It simply *is*. When we speak of the absolute we say that he is; if he could and were to speak of himself he would say I am. Thus I-AM is the name that is truly appropriate to life and expressive of the true state of its nature. Authority too, is not wanting in support of this view. When Moses asked God by what name he was to be introduced to the children of Israel, he was told: "I am that I am;" and was commanded to say to them "I am hath sent me unto you." Life is not wrong when it says of itself I am that I am, that is, I am that who *is* or who should be called I-AM. Thus Jesus' words only mean, life was before Abraham, that is to say the soul is eternal.

We can now understand why the four beasts which were sprawling on the throne of God in the Revelation do not interfere with the dignity of God, and also how Christ and all those who are saved or shall be saved occupy the same throne. Life is common to them all, and they cannot be put away from it.

Now let us turn to the conception of the Logos who creates the world. The first thing to notice is that the Synoptic Gospels do not even once teach the dogma of the six days' creation as set up in the Old Testament. John is the only one of the Gospel writers who speaks of creation; but he ascribes it to Logos or the word, who is not to be found in the book of Genesis. John also shows

the destruction of the created things in his Revelation, which is an allegory of salvation. The things destroyed are in the inner world, the 'heart' of man, not outside in material nature. When the soul is rid of its delusions, errors, passions, emotions and appetites, it becomes perfect and is termed the Son of God, as a concrete being in contradistinction to the abstract absolute. He is the truest manifestation of divinity, omniscient, blissful, altogether divine. In him the divinity which ever remains unmanifest and unrevealed in the absolute is revealed fully and manifested. It is therefore absolutely true to say that none can know the Father unless the Son reveal him. The Son is a concrete soul not a metaphysical abstraction, and is really the only being entitled to be termed God but for the fact that that term has already been bestowed on an abstract conception. He therefore now naturally ranks as the Son of Life or God. According to St. Paul he is not only the son but the heir of God, which means the elimination of the absolute altogether from practical politics. The Logos is the soul itself stirred and actuated by the Word, that is to say, the Doctrine of Salvation, or hankering for God-realisation. He is not a being of flesh and blood in the outer world. He is the living soul within the body of flesh and on perfection stands out of its fleshy encasement as a pure perfect spirit—that is, God. It is the collective divinity of all such perfect souls, the sons or heirs of God, that is to be accredited with the statement: "Behold the man has become as one of us."

To go back to the idea of the Logos. If we can put down the things that are to be destroyed on the path of salvation we can quickly understand the nature of his work as creator. In other words his creation will lead us to an understanding of their creator. Here is a list of the things destroyed together with their symbolic equations:—

1. the sea, which is the abode of storms, i.e., passsions and emotions, namely, anger, pride, deceit and greed, the most furious forms of which are the four gales or winds;
2. milder kinds of sentiments, virtues and vices= rivers and fountains of water;

3. fleshly appetites = the earth;
4. false theories and notions = men;
5. the personality and its relations and ramifications = the sun, the moon, the stars, the potentates of the earth, etc; etc;
6. the lower ego = the beast;
7. false convictions = the dragon.

These are the principal enemies of the aspiring soul, and have to be destroyed before salvation is attained. These are also the creations of the Logos, and they clearly indicate who their creator is. They have no existence outside in the world; they are found in the kingdom of the soul from where they must ultimately be removed. When the conception of its own divinity is formed by the soul a great internal change takes place within it. It is no longer groping or floundering in a state of confusion; it has entered into light from darkness. Its conception of divinity is the Logos or Word (the doctrine) which removes the pre-existing chaos of confusion from the mind, peopling it with the notions of piety and truth, and the conceptions of the elements and things to be cared for and of those which are to be destroyed These are clearly marked out now in the consciousness of the soul, hence they are deemed and said to have been created. Their creator is responsible for their being and also for the welfare of the individual soul and of the soul nature in general. He is therefore the manager of the world and providence. Jesus represents Logos correctly according to the fourth Gospel. The Logos has full power and authority over the elements of disturbance and evil in the kingdom of the soul. He can perform all kinds of miracles there at his mere wish. Storms subside at his command; infirmities and diseases disappear; water is transformed into wine; loaves multiply. In a word, he performs all kinds of miracles in the kingdom of the soul, including the revival of the dead.

We thus see that the mystery of God is capable of an easy solution when once the intellect is allowed to get hold of the threads of the tangled skein. Unfortunately the teachers of Christianity were not at liberty to reveal their knowledge and the mystery has remained one up to this day.

APPENDIX B

The Origin of Religion

Almost all the world's religions accept the theory of karma in one way or another; that is, either openly or secretly. If they are properly studied it will be seen that they believe also in a Nirvana—again either openly or secretly. But in all the mythological religions the conceptions of karma and Nirvana are vague and obscure, and improperly understood. Even in Buddhism it is denied that the karmic bondage is material in its nature, while Nirvana actually stands for annihilation. No doubt Buddha believed in and spoke at times of the permanence, the eternity, of Nirvana, but he did not believe in the existence of a soul and not once did he affirm it. His idea of permanency, or eternity, therefore, fixed itself on to the condition of Nirvana, and not on the soul which for him did not exist. In other words, Buddha maintained the belief that once release from karma was obtained by, or through, annihilation, it could not be formed afresh. On this count alone, then—the display of so much ignorance of the soul and its nature—and apart from anything else, Buddhism can quite easily be left out of consideration as a possible source of Religion. The fact that it is also no more than two thousand five hundred years old further excludes any other claim it might have, for Religion is surely much older.

On the same grounds of recency we may also exclude from consideration the Semetic group of religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammadanism. This leaves us with Jainism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Taoism, and the ancient religions of Egypt and Greece. They are all united in teaching the same thing—the doctrine of Nirvana. They must therefore have had a common source. The question that confronts us is—Where is this source? It cannot be outside of them, for there is nothing to suggest the existence of any other religion that might be deemed to have taught the doctrine of Nirvana. When we study Jainism, we find a complete explanation of the theory of karma, a detailed description of soul nature, and likewise of the state of Nirvana. In

addition, the biographies of a very large number of men who have actually attained the *summum bonum* are also given. But this is not so with any other of the religions we have just named. In no other religion do we find these three features. In other creeds the description of soul nature is hazy and vague, either misunderstood or only half-comprehended. In the same way any account they give of karma is unscientific and inadequate. Furthermore, there are no biographies of men who attained Nirvana, as are possessed by Jainism. In fact, no other religion can lay claim that any of its adherents have ever attained that blessed state.

What, however, is most significant and to be carefully borne in mind when we study Jainism as a possible source of Religion is the fact that it is the only non-allegorical religion, the only creed that is a purely scientific system of religion which insists upon, and displays, a thorough understanding of the problem of life, or soul. No other religion can lay claim to this distinction. All others are non-scientific, dressed up in the garments of allegory and myth and metaphor, yet daring to masquerade as Truth. Certainly those artistic dabblers in Truth, the people who composed the allegories, must have been acquainted with the principles which they personified as gods and goddesses. For fact must always precede allegory. But clearly they were not omniscient men. Had they been they would have foreseen the disastrous outcome of their pastime of allegorising, the shedding of blood, the bitter feuds that have arisen from the concealment of Truth in a misconceived, misleading garb that hides effectively its real nature.

The conclusion to be reached from a study of comparative Religion is that the only thoroughly practical creed is Jainism. And for the simple reason that it was founded by omniscient men who did not resort to allegory in their loving labour of spreading Truth. Being omniscient they would foresee the consequences of such folly. The Jains believe that Religion is a *science*. For them Religion is either a set of natural laws based on fact or fiction. Either the one or the other; there being no intermediate place for it. They hold that that which cannot be conceived clearly and definitely, which, in short,

is unreliable, is not a fact. Only that which is certain, definite and reliable can be termed fact. And fact is ever amenable to rational explanation and scientific treatment. Arguing thus Jainism is the only religious system that recognises clearly the truth that religion is a science, as it must be if it is to be of any use at all. It is for this reason that Jainism is the only *man*-made religion, the only one that reduces everything to the iron laws of nature and, with modern science, refuses, and has always refused, to acknowledge the existence of a God who is at once creator and manager of a universe that by its very nature can be neither created nor managed. Putting Religion thus on a scientific basis it is worth while to investigate the Jain claim that full, penetrating, all-elucidating light is to be found only in Jainism. As a matter of fact it *is* only Jainism which realises that the question of the origion of Religion in a world that is eternal and uncreate does not arise. It is perfectly true when the Jains say that Religion originated with man; and that the first deified man of every cycle of time is the founder of Religion. Whenever a Tirthamkara arises he re-establishes the scientific truths concerning the nature of Life, and these truths are collectively termed Religion.

Since Jainism is the only religion that lays claim to having produced omniscient men it does seem plain that Religion does originate from the Jains; that Risabha Deva, the first perfect man of the current cycle of time, was the founder of Religion as taught by the Jains, for even the Hindus admit the Jain claim that he is the founder of Jainism; that it was founded very, very far back in time, countless untold milleniums ago, shortly after the first clouds began to form in the sky and the first water to descend on earth. We can only conjecture as to what really happened but it would seem that after a long time and at a period when there were no omniscient men to give warning certain of the followers of Jainism who happened to be endowed with a fanciful imagination allied to poetical genius had the idea of originating a new and pleasant pastime for whiling away the many idle moments they seem to have had. They began to toy with the Word of Truth and gradually to personify some

aspects of the Doctrine as gods and goddesses, building elegant, imaginative myths round them. Their work seems to have been much appreciated and their hidden charm to have proved so attractive that men of all classes and all lands took up the cult with enthusiasm. With the result that everybody tried to outvie his neighbour in the new art of clever disguise and the Word of Law was literally smothered under the prolific productions of poetic fancy and came, finally, to be lost to view.

After a time temples and pagodas were built to house representations of these mythological conceptions of the mind and the uninitiated masses were invited and encouraged by the new priestly class that arose, to worship these man-made deities. Then later still the rabble turned the tables and there sprang up a sharp division between the esoterics and the exoterics—the priests who held the secret, and the vulgar laity who fed them. Men are not born with an understanding of the secret significancy of allegorical myths, and it came to pass that the masses became firmly fixed in their belief in the exoteric faith which alone was known to them. Intolerance of any other view bagan to wax strong in them. As it grew stronger it led inevitably to religious persecution. The number of esoterics dwindled. Matters eventually came to such a pass that no esoteric dared preach the truth openly. It was at this time that the wisdom of secret initiation was recognised and the first institutions and mystery lodges were established for the purpose. They went by different names in different countries but the fundamental aim was the same, the resurrection of Life, the Son, or the Son of God, from the dead.

The estrangement between those who followed the word of the Tirthamkara in its unadorned, undisguised form, and the esoterics themselves, fostered as it was by the latter who had to keep up appearances before the rabble, became more and more pronounced. Finally the branch set itself up in opposition to the Tree, and up to the present time is still engaged in vociferously denying its relationship with the Source, calling it now atheistic,

now devoid of sense, now the destroyer of Religion. The last-comers in the religions, the mushroom growths of modern times, are those which have sprung up either as reformers of existing creeds or who have tried to strike out into paths that run parallel but little to the ancient tracks. They have had no revelation. Their knowledge is derived mostly from the misunderstood word of some ancient scripture on to which they have fastened themselves. It is possible to come across gleams of real insight here and there in some of their works; but this is only because a reformer stopped to ponder at some particular spot in the course of his rush through the corridor of myth and mythology.

It is not possible at this late date to determine the exact times of the appearance of the various Religions. But to a great extent the order of their appearance can be deduced. As we have already established, Religion started with the Jains in India as a Science of Salvation. Outside India no one else has ever claimed to have obtained salvation and certainly Religion has never worn elsewhere the scientific aspect that it does in Jainism. Then came the first allegorists—Jains, of course—and their method came to be copied far and wide. The descendants of these Aryan allegorists of India are known to-day as Hindus and the Rigveda is probably the oldest allegorical Scripture in the world. Next arose the sect which popularised sanguinary sacrifice. They misinterpreted the allegorical text and began to offer up animals on the sacrificial altar, until after a very long time a wave of reaction against it set in.

After the nirvana of the twenty-second Tirthamkara scientific Religion seems to have suffered an eclipse and almost to have disappeared for a time—until, in fact, the appearance of the twenty-third World Teacher in the ninth century B. C. In his time there seems to have been some upheaval in Indian metaphysical thought. It is probable that at least five out of the six schools of Hindu Philosophy originated during his lifetime, becoming fixed in their present form a few hundred years later. It is also very probable that the religions of the Parsees, the Jews, and of the Chinese Lao Tse were founded round about this time.

It was in the sixth century B. C. that the seed of Christianity was taken from India; although the Gospels were written some centuries later. Buddhism was born during the lifetime of the last Tirthamkara as a compromise between the exclusiveness of the Hindus and the rigid disciplinary ascetism of the Jains. Certainly Buddha was not born in the religion he founded. He was the disciple of various teachers, including the Jains, until he struck out for himself on a new path. The various systems of Mysticism that arose in different countries are all naturally posterior to the main creeds. Having thus traced the History of Religion it would certainly seem that we may take Jainism to be its source.

To refer again to Christianity. It has already been said that it was taken from India in the sixth century B. C. Its doctrine agrees in every particular with Jainism and as C. R. Jain has shown in his interpretation of St. John's Revelation the twenty-four Elders of that book are the Tirthamkaras of Jainism. The countless number of Siddhas (Perfect Souls) in Jainism are also to be found in the Book of Revelation. The same conceptions of karma, of the inflow and stoppage and riddance of matter in relation to karmic activity are common to both the religions. The description of the condition of the soul in Nirvana is identically the same, and the same is the case with the natural attributes of the soul substance. This is a hundred per cent agreement. There may be come agreement between Christianity and other religions on a few points, but never cent per cent. This is sufficient to show that Christianity was taken from Jainism. When was it taken? In Mahavir's time. For two reasons. Firstly, because it is not likely that the teaching about the four and twenty Elders could have been adopted from a distance or from hearsay, so that somebody must have actually seen the glory of Tirthamkarahood in the person of Mahavir and accepted the teaching about the earlier twenty-three Tirthamkaras also. Secondly, there are some texts in the Gospels which show that they were pronounced at a time when Nirvana was still attainable by humanity on our globe—that is beyond two thousand four hundred years ago, during which period it has ceased to be attainable. One of these texts says: "There be some stand-

ing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Its real import is the attainment of Nirvana, and since Nirvana ceased to be attainable over two thousand four hundred years ago it must therefore have been uttered in the sixth century B. C. or earlier. European scholarship has also shown that the seeds of Christianity were sown centuries before the supposed date of Jesus. Bearing all these facts in mind there can be no doubt that Christianity originated in the time of Mahavir himself.

ERRATA SLIP.

Page	*Line*	*From*	*For*	*Read*
14	12th	bottom	Fathres	Fathers
19	19th	"	body.	body."
22	5th	top	neuron	neutron
29	2nd	"	Pysioal	Physical
35	12th	"	look upon	look upon it
37	11th	bottom	ni	in
39	10th	top	stimules	stimulus
"	11th	bottom	absenoes	absence
47	8th	top	prerogatirs	prerogatives
53	19th	"	Religious	Religion
65	19th	"	choice.	choice."
90	1st	bottom	secape	escape
91	16th	top	ready." In	ready. "In
120	1st	bottom	exercise	exorcise
127	13th	"	shall be a	shall a
132	2nd	top	us	use
149	17th	"	rapidly	rapidity
153	"	"	But	"But
"	20th	"	burden.	burden."
"	"	"	"The	The
182	19th	"	in an any	in any
xii	8th	top	makes	He makes
xxiii	15th	bottom	come	some